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ON THE VATICAN LIBRARY OF SIXTUS IV.

BY J. W. CLARK, M.A.

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1898—1899.

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MONDAY, 6 March, 1899.

Professor RIDGEWAY, President, in the chair.

Mr J. W. CLARK made the following communication :

**THE VATICAN LIBRARY OF SIXTUS IV.**

**I. Introduction.**

BEFORE entering on the subject of this paper, I feel it necessary to make a short personal explanation.

In the course of my work on Libraries, I naturally paid a good deal of attention to the splendid room which Sixtus V. constructed for the Vatican collection in 1588; and I often wondered whether it would be possible to find out anything about the libraries of his predecessors. I knew that there was a Library attached to the old Basilica of Constantine, but I did not feel sure whether it belonged to the Pope or to the Chapter.

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of S. Peter's; and as for any Library private to the Pope, I conceived that it would be impossible to disinter its history from the secret archives of the papacy. One day, however, while working in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, my friend M. Léon Dorez told me that he had seen in Rome some volumes of Accounts dealing with these earlier libraries—that the books were chained to the desks—and that he had made a few extracts for his own use. Subsequently, with his usual kindness, he gave me some of these, and referred me, for fuller information, to the work of M. Eugène Müntz, *Les Arts à la Cour des Papes*. I there read, with the greatest interest, minute details of what the French call the *installation* of the Library by Sixtus IV., drawn up by Platina, the Librarian; and it was evident that if I could find the room or rooms to which these payments referred, I should be able to reconstruct the Library. With this object in view, I went to Rome in March, 1898, with letters of introduction to Father Ehrle, Librarian of the Vatican, and to others, in the hope of obtaining permission to examine parts of the palace not usually accessible to strangers. I was received with the greatest kindness and courtesy, and was about to begin the examination of the rooms once occupied by the Library of Sixtus IV., when Father Ehrle put into my hands an essay by M. Paul Fabre<sup>1</sup>, *La Vaticane de Sixte IV.*, which had appeared in the *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome* for December 1895, but of the existence of which I had never heard. On reading it, I found that M. Fabre had completely anticipated me; he had done exactly what I had come to Rome to do, and in such a masterly fashion that I could not hope to improve upon his work. After some consideration I determined to verify his conclusions by carefully examining the locality, and to make a fresh ground plan of it for my own use. I have also studied the authorities quoted by Müntz from my own

<sup>1</sup> I had hoped to have made the acquaintance of M. Fabre, and discussed this interesting subject with him; but, by a sad coincidence, on the day after I had read this paper I received a formal intimation of his premature death, 20 February, 1899, at the age of thirty-nine.

point of view, and I venture to differ from M. Fabre as to the probable arrangement of the bookcases in some of the rooms. In general, however, I wish it to be clearly and distinctly understood that I have based my paper on that of M. Fabre; and I esteem myself fortunate in being the first to draw the attention of English readers to this brilliant piece of work<sup>1</sup>.

In what I have written I have followed the usual plan of an Architectural History. I have collected in the first place all the entries in the Account-books that refer to the fabric, and then compared them with the building in its present state; secondly, I have collected the entries that refer to the fittings, and, by their help, and that of the catalogues, I have attempted to shew what the probable arrangement of the Library was.

## II. *History.*

A few years ago the idea prevailed that the Library of the Vatican had been founded, in a remote and mysterious period, by the immediate successors of S. Peter; and that its contents therefore represented the accumulated literary treasures of the Christian world from the very beginning to the present time.

Modern research has scattered this notion to the winds, and has shewn that until the fifteenth century the Library of the Vatican cannot be said to have been a substantial reality. On the other hand it would be erroneous to suppose that the Popes anterior to this period had been destitute of books. Examination of the manuscripts now in the library shews that many of those which were brought back to Rome from Avignon had belonged to Gregory XI. (1370–78), while some may be assigned to even a remoter date<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> There are two works to which I shall frequently refer: *Les Arts à la Cour des Papes pendant le xv<sup>e</sup> et le xvi<sup>e</sup> siècle*; par Eugène Müntz: Part III. 1882 (Bibl. des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, Fasc. 28); and *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au xv<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, par Eugène Müntz et Paul Fabre; Paris, 1887 (Ibid. Fasc. 48). The former will be cited as "Müntz"; the latter as "Müntz et Fabre."

<sup>2</sup> See the essay of De Rossi "De Origine Historia Indicibus scrinii et bibliothecæ Sedis Apostolicæ commentatio," prefixed to "Codices Palatini Latini Bibl. Vat." 4to. Romæ, 1886.

This being the case, it is not easy to fix the exact period at which the present collection of books may be said to have been begun, and, as the history of their acquisition, apart from that of the room intended to contain them, is quite beside my present purpose, I will pass over this portion of the subject very rapidly. Those who wish to claim as great an antiquity as possible for the library would probably date its beginning from 1420, when Pope Martin V. entered Rome on the termination of the schism; but he was compelled by circumstances to put his literary tastes aside, and to leave to his successor, Eugenius IV. (1431–47), the restoration of most of the books which their predecessors had used at Avignon<sup>1</sup>; and a catalogue drawn up in November, 1443<sup>2</sup>, enumerates about 340 volumes. Nicholas V. (1447–55) was a real lover of books, and increased his collection with so much energy and discretion, that he may well claim the title of founder of the Vatican Library. It was his intention, says one of his biographers, to build “a spacious library lighted by a range of windows on each side (*ingens et ampla transversalibus utrimque fenestris*)” which he proposed to throw open to the public<sup>3</sup>. In the letter of commendation which he furnished to one of his collectors, he says expressly: “we are trying by every means in our power to obtain a library of Greek and Latin books such as the Pope and the Holy See ought to possess, for the general use of learned men<sup>4</sup>. ”

The library which Nicholas V. succeeded in accumulating was more than respectable, the Latin MSS. alone amounting to 824 volumes<sup>5</sup>, as shewn by the catalogue made 16 April, 1455, for the use of his successor Calixtus III. This collection was arranged in eight presses, set against the wall of a room

<sup>1</sup> Müntz et Fabre, *Bibliothèque du Vatican*, pp. 1–6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6. The catalogue is printed, from the original in the Vatican, pp. 9–32.

<sup>3</sup> Manetti, in Muratori, *S. R. I.* iii. Pt. 2, col. 933 d. I owe this quotation to M. Fabre.

<sup>4</sup> Müntz et Fabre, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 42. The catalogue is printed pp. 48–112.

lighted by a single window, six on the right, and two on the left<sup>1</sup>, but the position of the room is unknown.

During the sixteen years that intervened between the death of Nicholas V. and the election of Sixtus IV. little or nothing seems to have been done for the increase of the Library; but with the accession of Francesco della Rovere a new era begins. The new Pope had studied, as a young man, at the Universities of Paris and Bologna; and subsequently, had been a successful Professor not only at those Universities, but at Padua, Siena, Florence, and Perugia. He was distinguished, moreover, as a writer on theology and philosophy. No man, therefore, could have been better able to judge of the value of a library, or of the importance of establishing one in a prominent position, to which all who wanted knowledge might resort, as to a fountain-head. The need of such a library in Rome had probably been long in his mind, for in December, 1471, only four months after his election, his chamberlain commissioned five architects to quarry and convey to the palace a supply of building-stone "for use in a certain building there to be constructed for library-purposes<sup>2</sup>"; but the scheme for an independent building, as indicated by the terms here employed, was soon abandoned, and nothing was done for rather more than three years. In the beginning of 1475, however, a new impulse was given to the work by the appointment of Bartolommeo Platina as Librarian (28 February)<sup>3</sup>; and from that date until Platina's death in 1481 it went forward without let or hindrance. This distinguished

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44. The catalogue begins with: "libri repositi in primo armario a dextera versus fenestram," and so on.

<sup>2</sup> This document, dated 17 December, 1471, has been printed by Müntz, p. 120. It begins as follows: Cum pro oportunitatibus certi edificii bibliotecarum in palatio apostolico Sancti Petri construendarum necessarium sit ex diversis locis habere magnam quantitatem petrarum ad id necessariarum: Iccireo...universis et singulis...mandamus quatenus...dummodo ad privatas personas non pertineant, effodere ac exportare ad præfatum palatum permittant. I am afraid that this order can have but one meaning: viz. the excavation and destruction of ancient buildings.

<sup>3</sup> This is the date assigned by Platina himself. See below, p. 47. Messrs Müntz and Fabre (p. 137) adopt 18 June 1475, the day on which he signed the catalogue of the books he was to take charge of (*Ib.* p. 249).

man of letters seems to have enjoyed the full confidence of the Pope, to have been liberally supplied with funds, and to have had a free hand in the employment of craftsmen and artists to furnish and decorate his Library. It is pleasant to be able to record that he lived to see his work completed, and all the books under his charge catalogued. The enumeration of the volumes contained in the different stalls, closets, and coffers, with which the catalogue of 1481 concludes, is headed by a rubric, which records, with pathetic simplicity, the fact that it was drawn up "by Platina, librarian, and Demetrius of Lucca his pupil, keeper, on the 14th day of September, 1481, only eight days before his death<sup>1</sup>."

It is evident that the Library had suffered considerably from the negligence of those in whose charge it had been. Many volumes were missing, and those that remained were in bad condition. Platina and his master set to work energetically to remedy these defects. The former engaged a binder, and bought materials for his use<sup>2</sup>; the latter issued a Bull (30 June) of exceptional severity<sup>3</sup>. After stating that "certain ecclesiastical and secular persons, having no fear of God before their eyes, have taken sundry volumes in theology and other faculties from the library, which volumes they still presume rashly and maliciously to hide and secretly to detain"; such persons are warned to return the books in question within forty days. If they disobey they are *ipso facto* excommunicated. If they are clerics they shall be incapable of holding livings, and if laymen, of holding any office. Those who have knowledge of such persons are to inform against them. The effect produced by this document has not been recorded; nor are we told what the extent of the loss was. It could hardly

<sup>1</sup> MS. Vat. Lat. 3947, fol. 118 b. Notatio omnium librorum Bibliothecæ palatinæ Sixti quarti Pont. Max. tam qui in banchis quam qui in Armariis et capsis sunt a Platyna Bibliothecario et Demetrio Lucense eius alumno custode die xiii. mensis Septemb. m.cccc.lxxxi facta. Ante vero eius decessum dierum octo tantummodo. This *Notatio* has been printed, Müntz et Fabre, p. 250, but without the catalogue to which it forms an appendix. This, so far as I know, still remains unprinted.

<sup>2</sup> Müntz et Fabre, pp. 148—150, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.

have been very extensive, for a catalogue which Platina prepared, or perhaps only signed, on the day of his election, enumerates 2527 volumes, of which 770 were Greek and 1757 Latin<sup>1</sup>. The number of the latter had more than doubled in the twenty years that had elapsed since the death of Nicholas V., an augmentation due, in all probability, to the activity of Sixtus himself.

The place selected to contain this extensive collection was the ground-floor of a building which had been erected by Nicholas V. The position of it, and its relations to neighbouring structures will be understood from the accompanying plan (fig. 1), which I borrow from M. Fabre's paper. In the present arrangement of the Vatican the building with which we are concerned extends across the south end of the court of the Belvedere (*Cortile basso del Belvedere*) for about three-quarters of the distance from east to west; but in the fifteenth century, before the galleries connecting the palace with the Belvedere were built, the site of this court was laid out as a garden, and neither the Torre Borgia at the west end of the building of which I am speaking, nor certain other constructions at the opposite end, between it and what is now the Cortile di San Damaso, had been erected; so that the north façade was much more free and better lighted than it is at present. M. Fabre draws attention to the interesting historical and artistic associations of this building. The ground-floor became celebrated as the Library of the Vatican; the first-floor as the Appartamento Borgia, decorated by Pinturicchio; and the second floor as the Stanze of Raphael.

The entrance to the rooms on the ground-floor is on the south side, from the small back court called *Cortile del Papagallo*<sup>2</sup>. In the fifteenth century this court was of larger extent,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 141. The catalogue is printed pp. 159—250.

<sup>2</sup> The name is derived from the frescoes with which its external walls were decorated during the reign of Pius IV. (1559—1565). They represented palm trees, on which parrots (*papagalli*) and other birds were perching. Fragments of these frescoes are still to be seen. The court beyond this “del Portocin di Ferro” was so called from an iron gate by which the passage into it from the Cortile del Papagallo could be closed.

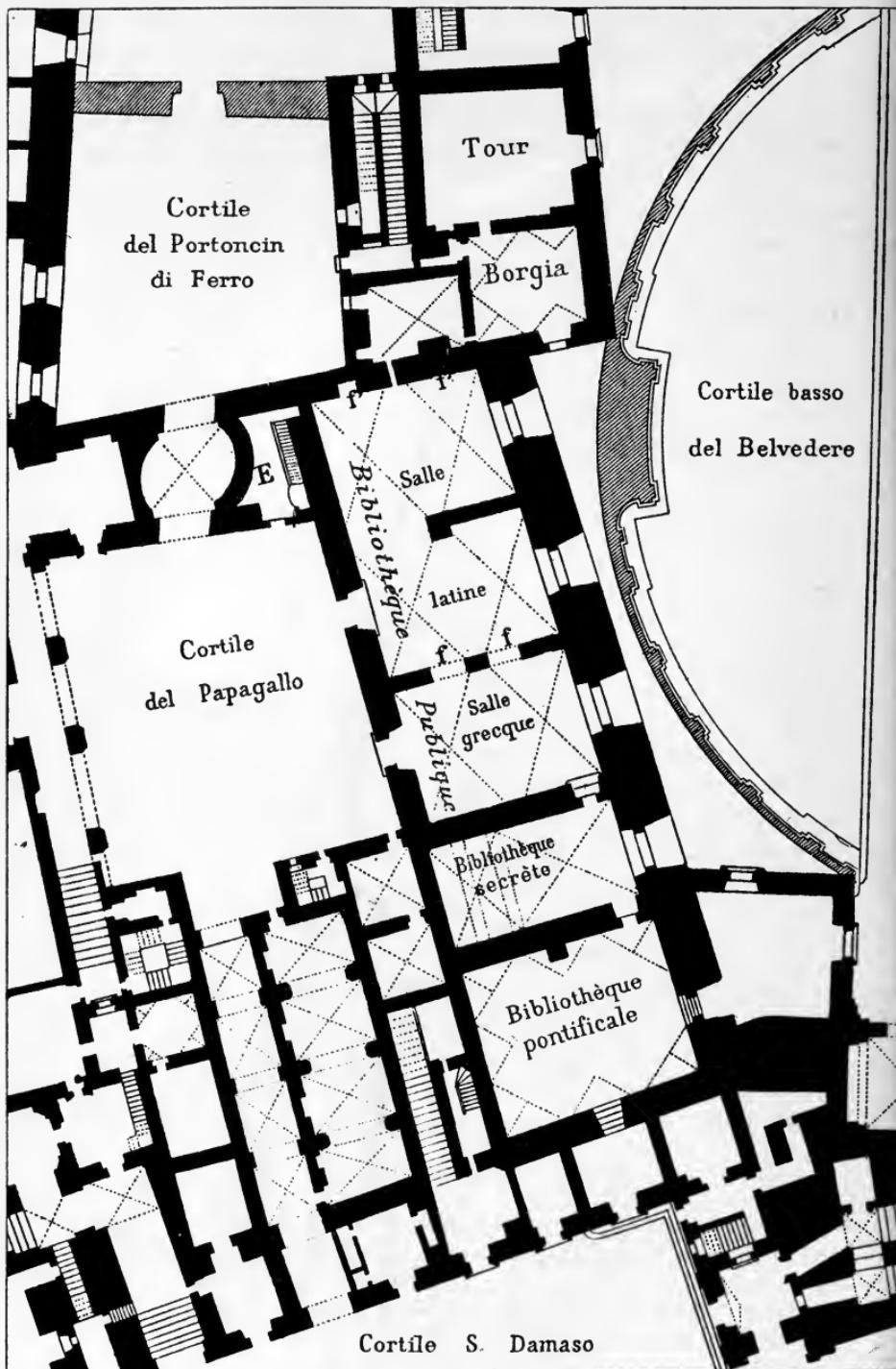


FIG. 1. Ground-plan of part of the Vatican Palace, shewing the building of Nicholas V., arranged for library purposes by Sixtus IV., and its relation to the surrounding structure. From Letarouilly, *Le Vatican*, fol. Paris, 1882, as reproduced by M. Fabre.

and was used, as the *Cortile di San Damaso* is at present, to provide access to the different parts of the palace. On the south side the floor of the building is on the same level, or nearly so, as the court, but on the opposite or north side the ground falls away abruptly, and the general level of the ground-floor is more than thirty feet above that of the *Cortile del Belvedere*. On this side therefore there is a basement, once used as a kitchen, or perhaps a cellar.

The former destination of the rooms fitted up for library-purposes by Sixtus IV. is indicated in the following epigram by Aurelio Brandolini :

*De bibliotheca ex poenu facta. Epygramma XIII.*

Que fuerat quondam cereri madidoque lyeo  
Nunc phoebo est Sixti munere sacra domus.  
Sic versat fortuna vices hominumque deumque  
Omnia sic flunt Hoc meliora Duce<sup>1</sup>.

I presume that these classical allusions mean that the rooms had been used as a provision-store, and that corn and wine had been laid up in them.

The floor is divided into four rooms by party-walls which are probably older than 1475, but which are proved, by the catalogue of 1481, to have been in existence at that period. The first of these rooms, entered directly from the court, contained the Latin Library; the second, the Greek Library. These two, taken together, formed the Common, or Public, Library (*Bibliotheca communis*, *B. publica*, or merely *Bibliotheca*). Next to this room, or these rooms, was the *Bibliotheca secreta* or Reserved Library, in which the more precious MSS. were kept apart from the others. The fourth room, which was not fitted up till 1480 or 1481, was called *Bibliotheca pontificia*. In addition to MSS. it contained the papal archives and registers (*Regesta*). In the catalogue dated 1512 this library is called the *Intima et ultima secretior bibliotheca*, and seems to have contained the most valued treasures. This quadripartite

<sup>1</sup> MS. Vat. 5008, fol. 60.b., quoted by Müntz, p. 118. My transcript has been collated with the original.

division is also commemorated by Brandolini (Epigram XII.). After alluding to the founders of some of the famous libraries of antiquity, he says in conclusion :

Bibliotheca fuit, fateor, sua cuique, sed vna.  
Sixte pater vincis: quatuor vnum habes.

Thanks to the care with which Platina set down his expenditure, we are able to follow step by step the gradual transformation of the rooms. His account-books<sup>1</sup>, begun 30 June 1475, record, with a minuteness as rare as it is valuable, his transactions with the different artists and workmen whom he thought proper to employ. It was evidently intended that the Library should be beautiful as well as useful, and some of the most celebrated artists of the day were set to work upon it.

These precious volumes—now in the State Archives at Rome—are unique documents for the history of libraries. We can gather from them the whole process of fitting up a library in the fifteenth century; and further, the sort of establishment required for its proper maintenance and organisation.

The Librarian prudently began by ordering the bookcases, being evidently well aware that many months would elapse before any of them could be delivered. A carpenter (*faber lignarius*) signed a contract for the first part of the work 15 July, 1475; but in this place I shall say no more about the furniture. Soon afterwards (9 August) masons were set to work on the fabric; but unfortunately no particulars of the work are given. The most important item is the insertion of a window "on the side next the court." The name of an architect, Donatus, is mentioned once in the course of the

<sup>1</sup> These accounts have been printed with great accuracy (so far as I was able to judge from a somewhat hasty collation) by Müntz, *Les Arts à la Cour des Papes*, Vol. iii. 1882, p. 121 sq.; and by Müntz and Fabre, *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au xv<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, 1887, p. 148 sq. The former work contains the entries having reference to art (in its widest sense); the latter those having reference to the organisation of the Library. It is to be regretted that an arbitrary division of the accounts should have been made, for in documents of this nature much depends upon the order in which expenditure is set down.

work, but whether he was acting professionally, or merely lent one of his workmen, does not appear<sup>1</sup>.

The glazing of the windows was entrusted to a German, who is called simply Hormannus, i.e. Hermann. It may be concluded from the first of the following extracts (which is also the first in the Accounts referring to glass) that the work was actually done in the Library, with glass bought partly in Rome, partly in Venice.

I gave on the 16th September 1475 3 papal carlini to Hermann the German who is making the glass windows in the Library, to buy coals for melting lead.

I gave to [the same] one gold ducat for glass of various colours bought for the use of the Library.

I gave to Hermann the German, Master of the Windows, 15 carlini for 50 lb. of lead, and 6 lb. of sawder, 13 October.

I gave to Hermann the German 90 lb. of wrought iron.

I gave to the aforesaid Hermann 4 ducats for his journey to Venice to buy glass for the use of the Library, it being understood that this money is for his expenses on the road, 1 November, 1475<sup>2</sup>.

The exact number of windows provided in the Latin and Greek Libraries is specified in a memorandum dated 7 June, 1476, which records an arrangement made with Francis of Milan, the carpenter who supplied the fittings, as we shall see presently :

<sup>1</sup> Dedi ducatum unum muratoribus ob tectorium opus dealbationemque parietum ipsius bibliothecæ, die nona Augusti, 1475. Item dedi carlenos duos fabro quem Donatus architectus ad hanc operam conduxerat...die xiiii Augusti, 1475. Dedi ducatum unum muratoribus qui fenestram cameræ bibliothecæ fecere quæ ad curiam vergit. 21 Sept. 1475.

<sup>2</sup> Dedi die xvi Septembbris 1475 carlenos tres papales Hormanno Theutonico qui vitreas fenestras in bibliotheca facit ad carbones emendos ut liquefaciat plumbeum.

Dedi Hormanno Theutonico qui fenestras vitreas fabricat in bibliotheca ducatum unum aureum pro vitro varii coloris empto ad vsum bibliothecæ, die supradicta et millesimo.

Dedi Hormanno Theutonico magistro fenestrarum car. xv. pro quinquaginta libris plumbi et sex stamni die xiii 1475.

Dedi Hormanno Theutonico libras nonaginta ferri fabrefacti.

Dedi dicto Hormanno ducatos IIII. ituro Venetas ad emenda vitra pro usu bibliothecæ, has autem pecunias datas esse pro expensis itineris intelligendum est, die primo Novembbris 1475. Müntz, p. 122.

"Moreover I make myself the debtor of the said Francis in a sum of one hundred and twenty-two ducats for five large windows and two of smaller size; for eight planks of chesnut-wood, (*talariis nucis*), for a grille for the door, for the piercing of four doors, and for a bench for the keepers: the actual value of all which things shall be set out when they are paid for<sup>1</sup>."

When the account was discharged it is set out as follows:

For 150 boards ( <i>tabulis</i> ) . . . . .	6 ducats
For 5 large windows . . . . .	21 "
For 8 planks of chesnut-wood ( <i>talariis nucis</i> ) also large .	28 "
For 2 windows (also large) which look into the court .	4 "
For the grille of the great door . . . . .	30 "
For the great door . . . . .	16 "
For the keepers' bench and settle . . . . .	10 "
For piercing four doors . . . . .	7 "
	122 ducats

This is the actual value I promised to set out, together with that of the boards which I had omitted<sup>2</sup>.

The glass and the *stannum*, a word which I have ventured to translate sawder, arrived 15 December, 1475, when a carlino was paid to the porters who carried the boxes from the custom-house to the Vatican<sup>3</sup>, and 77 ducats for carriage to the merchantman who brought them by sea from Venice. Between this date and 11 April 1476, 1100 pounds of lead were bought at different times; and there is a single payment for coals (15 January). The work was completed by the beginning of May, 1476, when the last payment was made to Hermann, ending with the significant words "there is no more for him to have (*nil amplius restat habere*)."<sup>4</sup> His own wages, from September 1475 to May 1476, exclusive of the purchase of materials, had amounted to 56 ducats.

<sup>1</sup> Müntz, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> Dedi his qui portarunt cassas vitri et stannum e dovana [dogana?] ad palatiū car. un. die xv decembris 1475. Expendi ducatos xv et b. [bonone-nos] LXIII pro vectura et expensis factis ab urbe Veneta hucus pro vitro et stamno ad vsum fenestrarum conducto die xv decembris 1475. *Ibid.*, p. 123. Solutum est xxii Januarii 1476 Dominico Petri mercatori veneto pro vitris emptis et stamno ad usum bibliothecæ ducatos LXII, bl. III. ut superius appetet. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

The door at the principal entrance to the Library from the *Cortile del Papagallo* was decorated with special care. Marble was bought for the doorcase, and the door itself was studded with 95 bronze nails, which were gilt, as were also the ring and knocker, and the frame of trellised ironwork (*cancellus*), which hung within the outer door. The following entries refer to this work, which was begun in April or May 1476, and not concluded till the following November.

Dedi Paulino Albertino pro clavis æneis quos facturus est pro magna porta bibliothecæ ducatos duos ad emendum as, die secunda maii.

Dedi m<sup>o</sup>. Andreæ mediolanensi qui inauraturus est clavos portæ magnæ bibliothecæ ducatos IIII pro parte solutionis die x Aprilis 1476.

Dedi m<sup>o</sup>. Ioanni lapicidæ ducatos duos pro marmore fabrefacto ad portam Bibliothecæ die XVII maii 1476.

Dedi eidem Paulino ducatos duos pro clavis æneis die XVIII maii 1476.

Dedi Paulo et Dionysio pictoribus cancelli et portæ bibliothecæ ducatos II, die XXII maii 1476.

Dedi Paulo et Dionysio pictoribus ducatum vnum die XXVI maii 1476.

Dedi eidem magistro Andreæ aurario ducatos septem die XXVII maii 1476.

Dedi eidem Paulo et Dionysio ducatum vnum die XXVIII maii.

Dedi Paulo et Dionysio ducatum vnum pro pictura die V Junii 1476.

Dedi pictoribus videlicet Dionysio et Paulo ducatos X pro pictura cancelli et portæ magnæ die octava Junii 1476.

Dedi Paulino suprascripto pro clavis nonaginta quinque æneis magnis, pro annulo eiusdem portæ, cum rosa, scuto, clavo ad percutiendum hostium, ducatos XIII cum dimidio die VII novembris 1476. Nil amplius restat habere.

Dedi carlenos quinque magistro Andreæ aurario pro reliquo inauraturæ clavorum æneorum portæ majoris. Summa est XI ducatorum et quinque carlenorum, nil amplius restat habere, die VII novembris 1476.

Dedi Paulo et Dionysio pictoribus pro reliquo picturæ factæ in cancello et auro ibi posito, pro restaurata pictura bibliothecæ [? grecæ], ducatos X; nil amplius restat habere. Omnia sunt d. XXV, die VII novembris 1476.

Dedi magistro Andreæ aurario ducatos tres cum dimidio pro inauratura annuli portæ magnæ, pro clavo ad percutiendum, scuto et rosa, nil restat habere, die XIII novembris 1476<sup>1</sup>.

If these payments be analysed it will be seen that the bronze nails, ring, and knocker cost 18 ducats and a half; that

<sup>1</sup> Müntz, pp. 125—127.

Andrew of Milan was paid 11 ducats and 5 carlini for gilding the said nails, with 3 ducats and a half more for gilding the knocker and its appurtenances; and that Paul and Dionysius received 25 ducats for painting the door and the grille behind it: total, 58 ducats—only 7 ducats less than the sum paid to the brothers Ghirlandajo for decorating the whole of the Common Library.

The floor, at any rate in the Latin and Greek Libraries, seems originally to have been paved, from the terms in which the repair of it is recorded, 21 August, 1475<sup>1</sup>. But not long afterwards, before the end of the century according to M. Fabre, it was replaced by encaustic tiles, singularly beautiful both in design and colour. In the Latin Library, this pavement is so much worn by long use, that the design can hardly be made out; but in the Greek Library, and in the *Bibliotheca secreta* beyond, the tiles are nearly as fresh as when they were laid down<sup>2</sup>. The pattern is worked in pale blue or pale green upon a ground which has become, by lapse of time, of a yellowish colour, like ivory. The tone of the whole is deliciously soft. The purchase of these tiles is not mentioned in the Accounts of Sixtus IV., and it most probably took place after his death. They are precisely the same as those used in the Borgia apartment on the first floor over the Library, and were doubtless laid down at the same time (1492—1503). M. Fabre records the opinion of Professor Tesorone, director of the *Museo artistico-industriale* at Naples, under whose direction the pavement of the Borgia apartment has been admirably restored, that these tiles were probably made in Umbria, either at Perugia or at Deruta<sup>3</sup>.

The decoration of the walls and roof was begun in November, 1475. The artists selected were Domenico and David Ghirlandajo, of Florence; a mason and his mate (*murator et socius*

<sup>1</sup> Dedi muratori qui pavimentum ex brevioribus lapillis restituit in biblioteca ducatum unum...die xxi Augusti. Müntz, p. 122. These small pieces of stone used for paving are called *mattonelli*.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fabre, *La Vaticane*, p. 462, gives a drawing of a small piece of this pavement.

<sup>3</sup> Fabre, *La Vaticane*, pp. 461, 462.

*ejus*) were engaged to build two scaffolds, apparently one for each artist, and move them as required (28 November); and it is distinctly stated that Domenico began to work on the same day<sup>1</sup>. His brother David is not mentioned until 14 December. The last payment is made 4 May, 1476, by which time the decoration of the Latin Library was probably complete. Up to that date the sums paid had amounted to 65 ducats.

A still more important entry in the accounts referring to artistic work is the following:

I gave to Maestro Melozzo, painter, six ducats to buy gold for the painting in the Library, 15 January, 1477<sup>2</sup>.

The painter thus designated is Melozzo dà Forli, an eminent artist who had come to Rome in 1472, through the influence, in all probability, of Girolamo Riario, one of the nephews of Sixtus IV., on whom the town of Forli had been conferred as a fief.

The entries which I have collected from the Accounts up to this point show that the Common Library and the Greek Library were practically finished by the end of 1477. The Inner Library or *Bibliotheca secreta* was undertaken next; and, before it was finished, the *Bibliotheca pontificia* and the rooms for the Librarian and his assistants were begun. The whole was finished by the end of 1481, but in that year and the previous one, the three separate pieces of work above mentioned were proceeding together, and it is often difficult, if not impossible, to be certain to which a special entry refers.

The furniture for the *Bibliotheca secreta* was ordered in January, 1477, of a workman who is described as John the

<sup>1</sup> Dedi ducatos x auri Dominico Thomasii pictori florentino pro pictura bibliothecæ quam inchoavit die xxviii novembris 1475. Dedi Xanthino muratori pro lignis et funibus ad pontes faciendo ducatos tres et car. iii, ii pontes pro pictura fiunt in bibliotheca, die xxviii, 1475. Dedi Santino (*sic*) et Joanni ejus socio die ultima Novembris 1475 ducatos quatuor pro ponte confecto mutatove ubi oportuit. Dedi ducatos quinque David pictori fratri Dominici supradicti xxxx decembris 1475. Müntz, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Dedi magistro Melotio pictori pro auro emendo pro pictura quam pingit in bibliotheca ducatos sex die xv Januarii 1477. Müntz, p. 127; see also p. 95.

Florentine (*Joannes florentinus*), and at a later date as Joanninus; but the consideration of these important entries, as of those referring to the furniture of the rooms previously considered, must be postponed for the present.

In December, 1477, a German glass painter, called simply Conrad, is employed upon the windows, and in May, 1478, he, or his workmen, make a wooden trellis to protect the glass:

Habuit Conradus Theutonicus qui restituit fenestras vitreas et tres denuo [de novo] fecit ducatos duos et carlenos quinque die xi decembris 1477.

Item dedi ducatum unum his qui fecerunt fenestras ex ramo pro tutella fenestrarum vitrearum die viii maii 1478.

Item dedi ducatos duos his qui fecere prædictas ramatas<sup>1</sup> die xviii maii 1478<sup>2</sup>.

At this juncture the work seems to have been interrupted for two years or more; for the next entries concerning the glass and other matters belong to the latter half of 1480; by which time the new library ordered by the Pope (*Bibliotheca pontificia*) had been begun.

Emi libras XII vitri albi pro armis faciendis in fenestra vitrea bibliothecæ novæ à VI b. [bononenos] la libra.

Item uncias IIII smalti à b. IIII l' onza, et XXX filcete (filzette?) de paternostri pro eisdem fenestris b. VI, die qua supra [27 August, 1480] d. I. b. XVIII<sup>3</sup>.

In this year a second German glass-painter, Georgius theutonicus, is employed. In October he was paid four ducats for working up into a window for the new library the glass bought in the previous August:

Item habuit Georgius theutonicus pro factura fenestrae vitreae magnæ in bibliotheca nova factæ ducatos IIII auri, die XVIII octobris 1480<sup>4</sup>.

While this work was going forward, considerable changes were effected in the fabric, such as the blocking of windows and doors, and the repairs of the walls. It is evident that the room destined for the "new library" had previously been put

<sup>1</sup> Ducange, s.v. *Ramata*, says that it is equivalent to the modern French *treille*.

<sup>2</sup> Müntz, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

to some other use<sup>1</sup>. At about the same date the same workmen set up a scaffold in the *Bibliotheca secreta* for the painters, and openings were made in the wall between the Greek and Latin Libraries. With reference to the latter work the following important entry occurs under the date 27 August, 1480 :

Item pro purganda bibliotheca veteri et asportandis calcinaciis duarum fenestrarum factarum inter græcam et latinam b. xx die qua supra<sup>2</sup>.

The painters employed in the *Bibliotheca secreta* and *Bibliotheca pontificia* were Melozzo dà Forli and another called simply Antonazzo. It is evident, from the way in which the first entry concerning them is expressed, that the fourth room of the series was an afterthought :

Habuere Melotius et Antonatius pictores pro pictura facta in bibliotheca secreta et in illa additione quam nuper fecit d. n. ducatos decem die xxv Junii 1480<sup>3</sup>.

They received in all 89 ducats and a half for their work, about which hardly any details are given. In the centre of the ceiling of the *Libraria secreta* was a coat of arms, probably those of the Pope, carved in wood. These were gilt and painted, as shewn by a subsequent entry for the purchase of colours ; and coloured lines seem to have been drawn round the doors and windows. This last payment marks the conclusion of the whole work.

Habuit magister Antonatius per un arma de legno intagliata per mettere nel sopracelo della libreria secreta ducati doa die xvi augusti 1480.

Item habuit magister Antonatius ducatos duos cum dimidio pro linamentis hostiorum et fenestrarum pictarum in ipsa bibliotheca die x aprilis 1481, nil amplius restat habere<sup>3</sup>.

Rooms for the librarian and keepers were fitted up in 1480 and 1481. The only detail of interest is a payment to Francis of Milan for a door of inlaid wood between the Library and the librarian's room. Further, it appears that

<sup>1</sup> Habuit m. Gratiadeus murator pro claudendis fenestris, hostiis (?), foraminibus, pro reficiendis muris, calce puteolanaque emenda in bibliotheca nova ducatos vii et b. xxv die xxv Augusti 1480. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

this latter room was wisely provided with a window looking into the Library, so that the librarian could see what was going forward there.

Habuit Gratiadeus pro fabrica quæ fit apud Bibliothecam pro duabus cameris ad usum bibliothecarii et custodum, ubi erat coquina vetus<sup>1</sup>.

Item habuit magister Franciscus de Mediolano faber lignarius pro una porta de pino intarsiata che va de la camera a la libreria ducati tre. Item per una porta de pino [che] va nela corte ducati doa. [8 January, 1481.]

Item habuit magister Ioannes de Caravagio faber lignarius pro duabus portis duplicibus studii et cameræ ducatos tres, pro fenestra studii et ea quæ respicit in librariam ducatos duos. [Same day.]

### III. Comparison of the building with the Accounts.

We will next compare the various extracts from the Accounts which I have collected together with the building, assisted by the accompanying plan (fig. 2), drawn from measurements taken by myself during my visit to Rome in March last.

The building is entered from the *Cortile del Papagallo* through a marble doorway (fig. 2, A) in the classical style surmounted by the arms of Sixtus IV. On the frieze are the words *SIXTUS PAPA IIII*. The doorcase is doubtless that made in 1476; but the door, with its gilt nails and other ornaments, has disappeared. Within the doorway there has been a descent of three steps at least to the floor of the Library<sup>2</sup>. The four rooms of which it was once composed are now used as the *Floreria* or *Gardemeuble* of the Vatican Palace; a use to which they have probably been put ever since the new Library was built at the end of the sixteenth century. My plan shews the building as it was when first built, before other structures abutted against it. To understand its present condition the plan of Letarouilly (fig. 1), must be studied.

The rooms at the east end, by which one of the windows (H, fig. 2) of the *Biblioteca pontificia* is blocked, are part of

<sup>1</sup> Müntz, pp. 133, 134. This payment and several that follow were made 18 October, 1480.

<sup>2</sup> The difference of level between the floor of the court and the floor of the library is eighteen inches. An inclined plane of wood now replaces the steps.

the substructions of the gallery which extends along the greater part of three sides of the *Cortile di San Damaso*, and were added by Julius II. (1503—1513); the small building which blocks the other window (*ibid.*, G) is connected with the *Galleria del Belvedere*; and at the west end the *Torre Borgia*, built by Alexander VI. (1492—1503), takes away some of the light from the Latin Library.

The Latin Library, into which the door from the court opens directly, is a noble room, 58 ft. 9 in. long, 34 ft. 8 in. wide, and about 16 ft. high to the spring of the vault. In the centre is a square pier, which carries the four plain quadripartite vaults, probably of brick, covered with plaster. The room is at present lighted by two windows (B, C) in the north wall, and by another, of smaller size, above the door of entrance (A). That this latter window was inserted by Sixtus IV., is proved by the presence of his arms above it on a stone shield. This is probably the window “next the court” made in 1475. The windows in the north wall are about 8 ft. high by 5 ft. broad, and their cills are 7 ft. above the floor of the room. Further, there were two windows in the west wall (*b, c*) a little smaller than those in the north wall, and placed at a much lower level, only a few feet above the floor. These were blocked when the *Torre Borgia* was built, but their position can still be easily made out<sup>1</sup>. This room must have been admirably lighted in former days.

The room next to this, the Greek Library, is 28 ft. broad by 34 ft. 6 in. long. It is lighted by a window (fig. 2, D) in the north wall, of the same size as those of the Latin Library, and by another (*ibid.*, E) a good deal smaller, opposite to it. This room was originally entered from the Latin Library by a door close to the north wall (*d*). But, in 1480, two large

<sup>1</sup> M. Fabre (without whose help I probably should not have observed these windows) says of them: “L'amorce de l'une d'elles (celle de gauche) est encore apparente; quant à la seconde les barreaux (*inferriata*) en étaient encore visibles du côté de la *Torre Borgia* (je le tiens d'un employé de la *Floreria*) avant qu'on eût construit, à l'intérieur de la Tour, le pilastre qui la cache, et qui fut établi sous Pie IX pour soutenir la salle de l'Immaculée Conception créée au second étage.” Fabre, p. 460.

openings (*e, f*) were made in the partition-wall, either because the light was found to be deficient, or because it was thought best to throw the two rooms into one as far as possible. At some subsequent date the door (*d*) was blocked up, and the opening next to it (*e*) was carried down to the ground, so as to do duty as a door. The other opening (*f*), about 7 ft. 6 in. square, remains as constructed.

In one of Platina's memoranda quoted above, under date 7 June, 1476, "five large windows and two of smaller size" are mentioned; and, in the more detailed account which follows, the cost of the latter is set down as "pro duabus fenestris etiam magnis quæ vergunt ad curiam." I conceive that in this memorandum Platina is referring to the Latin and Greek Libraries taken together. The "five large windows" are the three in the north wall (B, C, D), and the two in the west wall (*b, c*); the "two of smaller size looking into the court" are the window at the south end of the Greek Library (E), and that over the door of entrance (A). Four doors are mentioned in the same memorandum. It is not easy to identify these. The door of entrance (A) and the door into the Greek Library (*d*) are certainly two of them; the other two may be the door between the Greek Library and the Bibliotheca Secreta, and the door into the Librarian's room (*a*); or that door and the door into his room from the court.

The decorative work of the brothers Ghirlandajo can still be made out, at least in part, though time has made sad havoc with it. The edges of the vaulting were made prominent by classical moldings coarsely drawn in a dark colour; and at the key of each vault is a large architectural ornament, or coat of arms, surrounded by a wreath of oak-leaves and acorns, to commemorate the Della Rovere family. They are tied together on each side with long flaunting ribbons, which, with their shadows, extend for a considerable distance over the vaults. The semi-circular lunettes in the upper part of the wall under the vaults, are all treated alike, except that those on the sides of the room, being larger than those at the ends (fig. 2), contain two subjects instead of one. The lower part, for about 3 feet

in height, is painted to represent a solid marble balcony, behind which a Doctor or Prophet is supposed to be standing. He is visible from rather below the waist upwards, and holds in his hand a scroll bearing an appropriate text. On each side of the figure in the smaller lunettes, resting on the balcony, is a large vase of flowers; and behind it a clear sky. Round the upper edge of the lunette is a broad band of oak-leaves, and fruits of various kinds. The figures, of which there were evidently twelve originally, are the following, beginning with the one at the north-east corner over the door leading into the Greek Library, and proceeding to the right:

1. HIERONYMUS. *Scientiam scripturarum ama, et vitia carnis non amabis.*
2. GREGORIUS. *Dei sapientiam sardonyco et zaphyro non confer.*
3. THOMAS. *Text illegible.*
4. BONAVENTURA. *Fructus scripturæ est plenitudo æternæ felicitatis.*
5. ARISTOTELES.
6. DIOGENES.
7. CLEOBULUS.
8. ANTISTHENES. } *Legends illegible.*
9. SOCRATES.
10. PLATO.
11. AUGUSTINUS. *Nihil beatus est quam semper aliquid legere aut scribere.*
12. AMBROSIUS. *Diligentiam circa scripturas sanctorum posui.*

Jerome and Gregory occupy the east wall; Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura the first lunette on the south wall, over the door of entrance; Aristotle and Diogenes the next<sup>1</sup>, succeeded by Cleobulus and Antisthenes on the west wall; on the first lunette on the north wall are Socrates and Plato; in the second Augustine and Ambrose, facing Aquinas and Bonaventura. Thus the east half of the library is presided over by doctors of the Christian Church, the western by pagan philosophers.

The space on the north wall (*gh*) nearly opposite to the door

<sup>1</sup> There was evidently a window in this wall before the frescoes were executed, corresponding to that over the door of entrance. This was blocked by the building which contained the Librarian's room. Its existence shews that the library-building is the older of the two.

of entrance, was occupied by the fresco on which Melozzo da Forli was working in 1477. It was intended to commemorate the establishment of the Library in a permanent home by Sixtus the Fourth. The Pope is seated on the right of the spectator. On his right stands his nephew Cardinal Pietro Riario, and before him, his head turned towards the Pope, to whom he seems to be speaking, another nephew, Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, afterwards Pope Julius the Second. At the feet of the Pope kneels Bartolommeo Platina, the newly appointed Librarian, who is pointing with the fore-finger of his right hand to the inscription below the fresco. Behind Platina are two young men with chains of office round their necks. They have been identified with Girolamo Riario and Giovanni della Rovere.

The inscription, said to have been written by Platina himself, is as follows :

TEMPILA, DOMUM EXPOSITIS<sup>1</sup>, VICOS, FORA, MÆNIA, PONTES,  
VIRGINEAM TRIVI QUOD REPARARIS AQUAM,  
PRISCA LICET NAUTIS STATUAS DARE MUNERA PORTÙS,  
ET VATICANUM CINGERE, SIXTE, JUGUM,  
PLUS TAMEN URBS DEBET ; NAM QUÆ SQUALORE LATEBAT  
CERNITUR IN CELEBRI BIBLIOTHECA LOCO.

The fresco is now in the Vatican picture-gallery. It was transferred to canvas soon after 1815, when the present gallery was formed, and has suffered a good deal from what is called restoration<sup>2</sup>.

The decoration of the Greek Library is not alluded to in the Accounts<sup>3</sup>; but an interesting note of it, with an account of the other rooms also, is to be found in the description of the Vatican by Pietro Chattard, written in 1766 :

Il primo stanzone...fa vedere nelle sue lunette che le girano attorno

<sup>1</sup> A Foundling Hospital: see below, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Fabre, *La Vaticane*, p. 464. Bunsen, *Die Beschreibung der Stadt Rom*, ed. 1832, Vol. ii. Part 2, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> The following entry is curious: Habuere Paulus et Dionysius pictores duos ducatos pro duobus paribus caligarum quas petiere a domino nostro dum pingent cancelllos bibliothecæ et restituerent picturam bibliothecæ græcæ, ita n. Sanctitas sua mandavit, die xviii martii 1478. Müntz, p. 131.

dipinte a buon fresco, molte mezze figure rappresentanti alcuni Profeti Dottori di Santa Chiesa e Filosofi antichi col nome di ciascuno. Il campo di queste lunette è ricoperto da diverse architetture e paesi...Nella facciata incontro la porta esiste un quadro dipinto a fresco dell' altezza palmi venti e largo dieci rappresentante Sisto IV, assiso in una sedia con avanti a se un cardinale genuflesso ed un altro in piedi con diversi prelati che le fan corona ed alcuni versi latini al di sotto indicanti l' elogio delle gesta di tal pontefice...

Le quattro facciate della seconda stanza vedonsi da meravigliosa architettura d' ordine corintio ricoperte, con colonne parte verdi e parte gialle, architrave, fregio, cornice, e capitelli gialli da alcuni festoni interrotte<sup>1</sup>.

The lunettes have been ornamented on the same system as those of the Latin Library, but without figures; and their decoration still exists, though much damaged by time and damp. Below the lunettes the walls are covered with whitewash, under which some decoration is evidently concealed. The whitewash has peeled off in some places, and colour is beginning to make its appearance.

The *Biblioteca secreta* is 20 ft. wide by 38 ft. 6 in. long. This additional length is due to the thinness of the south wall, observable in this room and the next. It is evident that this wall is not an outside wall. In all probability the building containing the Library was always returned along the east side of the *Cortile del Papagallo*; but I am not able to say for how great a distance. The room is lighted by a single window in the north wall (fig. 2, F), of the same size and shape as the rest. The light is sufficient, even under present conditions.

The Accounts tell us nothing about the decoration. Pietro Chattard, the author quoted above, reports on it as follows:

Segue la terza ed ultima stanza tutta foderata di tavole, come anchè la volta nel mezzo della quale scorgesi un' armetta di Giulio II ornata all' intorno nella guisa stessa che le pareti da diversi rableschi, vasi, e fiorami con somma maestria a chiaroscuro dipinti.

The arms here mentioned are those of which the arrival in 1480 is recorded above. M. Fabre points out that Julius II. had the same arms as his uncle Sixtus IV.

<sup>1</sup> Nuova descrizione del Vaticano, t. II. Roma, 1766, p. 455: quoted by Fabre, *ut supra*, p. 466.

The expression of Chattard, "foderata di tavole," meaning "panelled," adds a new fact to our knowledge of the fittings of the Library. If we may believe Pansa, whose work on the Library of Sixtus V. was published in 1590, all the rooms in the old Library were similarly treated. After mentioning the care bestowed upon the MSS. in the way of binding, he proceeds :

Acciochè l' umidità non vi potesse far danno alcuno, fece Sisto IIII. foderare le stanze tutte (perchè erano un poco terrene, e umide) di tavole si di sotto e di sopra come da lato, nelle quali fece per ornamento far diverse pitture di fiori e altre cose come pur oggi si vedono<sup>1</sup>.

This writer cannot be accurate when he states that the rooms were panelled above, i.e. on their ceilings. We know by the remains still existing in the Latin and Greek Libraries, that the vaults there were treated in quite a different manner, but I see no reason for doubting his accuracy respecting the walls, and I beg leave to suggest that by "panels whereon he caused divers pictures of flowers and other objects to be made," inlaid work with which the panels were decorated may be meant. We shall see presently that there was some beautiful inlaid work in the Library, part of which still exists.

The fourth and last room—spoken of in 1480 as "that addition which our Master lately made"—is 29 ft. wide by 40 ft. 6 in. long. It is at present lighted by only a single window in the north wall (fig. 2, G), and is very gloomy. But in former days, as explained above, it had another window in the middle of the east wall (*ibid.*, H), where there is now a door. Nothing certain can be made out about its decoration.

It is much to be regretted that so little is said about the glazing of the windows throughout the Library. Great care was evidently bestowed upon them, and the engagement of foreign artists, with the purchase of glass at Venice, because, apparently, none good enough could be found in Rome, are proofs that something specially beautiful was intended. Coloured glass is mentioned, which may have been used either for coats of arms—

<sup>1</sup> Della Libraria Vaticana Ragionamenti di Mutio Pansa. 4to. Roma, 1590, p. 320.

and we know that the Papal Arms were to be set up in the *Bibliotheca secreta*—or for subjects. But, in forming conjectures as to the treatment of these windows, it should be remembered that the transmission of light must always have been the first consideration, and that white glass must have preponderated. I am not aware that any Library-glass (properly so called) has survived in Italy; so that we cannot obtain help from any contemporary example, or from any windows in a similar position. The windows of the *Bibliotheca Laurenziana* at Florence were glazed, in or about 1558, with singularly beautiful glass by Giovanni da Udine, which still, I am glad to say, exists, to the delight of all beholders; but, when the design is analysed, it will be seen that these windows are, practically, all alike, and that the design adopted has no special reference to books. The arms of the Medici are repeated in the centre of each light, surrounded by wreaths, arabesques, and other devices—ininitely graceful and varied, but not distinctive. They would have been as suitable for a palace as for a library.

The rooms for the Librarian and his assistants were in a small building which abutted on the Library at its S.W. corner, and stood between the two courts, obtaining light from each. Over the door of entrance was the inscription :

SIXTUS . IIII . PONT . MAX.

BIBLIOTECARIO . ET . CVSTODIBVS . LOCVM . ADDIXIT<sup>1</sup>.

The accommodation provided was not magnificent, two rooms only being mentioned. A door (fig. 2, *a*), now blocked, gave access to the Library from this building. It is interesting to note, as a proof of the richness of all the work, that it was of inlaid wood (*pino intarsiata*). The window mentioned in the accounts cannot now be discovered. It is probably concealed by some of the contents of the Florearia.

The work of fitting up this Library occupied about six years. It began in September 1475, and proceeded continuously to January 1477, when Melozzo's fresco was in progress. In

<sup>1</sup> Fabre, *La Vaticane*, p. 465, citing Bandini, *Bibliothecæ Mediceo-Laurenzianæ catalogus*, i. p. xxxviii.

December of that year the windows of the *Bibliotheca secreta* were begun; but during 1478 and 1479 nothing was done. In 1480 work was resumed, and the last payment to painters was made in 1481.

#### IV. *The furniture.*

Let us now consider how these rooms were fitted up for the reception of books. I will first collect the notices in the Accounts respecting desks, or *banchi*, as they are called, and then compare them with the rooms themselves, and with the descriptions in the catalogues, which are fortunately extremely full; and I think that it will be possible to give a clear and consistent picture of the arrangements. As mentioned above, Platina's first care on entering office was to order the desks for the Latin Library. This is set down in the following terms:

I have counted out, in the presence of Clement, steward of the household of His Holiness our Master, Salvatus the library-keeper (*librarius*), and Demetrius the reader (*lector*), 45 ducats to Francis the carpenter of Milan, now dwelling in the fishmarket of the city of Rome, towards making the desks in the library; and especially ten desks which stand on the left hand, the length of which is 38 palms or thereabouts; and so having received a part of the money, the total of which is 130 ducats, he promises and binds himself to do that which it is his duty to do, this 15th day of July, 1475<sup>1</sup>.

The full name of this carpenter is known, from his receipts, to have been Francesco de Gyovane di Boxi da Milano. He received in all 300 ducats instead of the 130 mentioned in the first agreement, and when the last payment was made to him, 7 June, 1476, the following explanatory note is given:

Moreover I have paid to the same [Francis the carpenter] 30 ducats for what remains due on 25 desks for the Library: for the longer ones,

<sup>1</sup> Enumeravi, præsente Clemente synescalcho familie s. d. n., Salvato librario, et Demetrio lectore, ducatos xlv Francischō fabro lignario mediolanensi habitatori piscinæ urbis Romæ pro banchis Bibliothecæ conficiendis, maxime vero decem quæ ad sinistram jacent, quorum longitudo est xxxviii palmorum, vel circa, et ita accepta parte pecuniarum, cuius summa est centum et xxx ducatorum, facturum se debitum promittit et obligat, die xv Julii 1475. Müntz, p. 121.

which are 10 in number, there were paid, as entered above, 130 ducats; for the rest there were paid 170 ducats, making a total of 300 ducats, and so he has been paid in full for all the desks, this 7th day of June, 1476<sup>1</sup>.

We shall see presently that these twenty-five desks make up the number required, on the evidence of the catalogues, for the Greek and Latin Libraries taken together; for, as has been already mentioned, these two rooms are often described in the Accounts as one room, and are called simply the Library.

In 1477 the furniture for the next room, the *Bibliotheca secreta* or Inner Library, was begun. The work was entrusted to a Florentine, called in the Accounts merely *Magister Joanninus faber lignarius de Florentia*, but identified by M. Fabre with Giovannino dei Dolci, one of the builders of the Sistine chapel. The most important entry referring to him is the following:

Master Giovannino, carpenter of Florence, had from me Platyna, librarian of His Holiness our Master, for making the desks in the inner library, for the great press, and the settle, in the said room—all of which were estimated by Master Francis of Milan at one hundred and eighty ducats—he had, as aforesaid, sixty-five ducats and sixty groats on the 7th May, 1477<sup>2</sup>.

The last payment on this account was made 18 March, 1478; on which day he also received eight ducats for three frames “to contain the names of the books,” and for some

<sup>1</sup> Item solvi eidem ducatos xxx pro reliquo xxv banchorum bibliothecæ : pro longioribus autem qui sunt x solvebantur centum et triginta, ut supra scriptum est ; pro reliquis solvebantur centum et septuaginta ; quæ summa est tricentorum ducatorum : atque ita pro banchis omnibus ei satisfactum est, die vii Junii 1476. Müntz, p. 126. The rest of the money had been paid to him by instalments between 15 July, 1475, and this date.

<sup>2</sup> Magister Joanninus faber lignarius de Florentia habuit a me Platyna s. d. n. bibliothecario pro fabrica banchorum Bibliothecæ secrete, pro Armario magno et Spaleria ejusdem loci, quæ omnia extimata fuerunt centum et octuaginta ducat' a magistro Francisco de Mediolano ; habuit, ut præfertur, ducatos sexaginta quinque et bononenos sexaginta die vii maii 1477. Müntz, p. 130. There were 100 bononeni in each ducat.

repairs to old desks<sup>1</sup>. These frames were painted by one of Melozzo dà Forli's workmen<sup>2</sup>.

The desks for the fourth room or *Bibliotheca pontificia* were ordered in 1480–81. The workmen employed were Giovannino and his brother Marco.

Master Giovannino of Florence and Master Marco his brother, a carpenter, received xxv ducats in part payment for the desks which are being made in the library now added by His Holiness our Master, 18 July, 1480<sup>3</sup>.

These workmen received 100 ducats up to 7 April, 1481, but the account was not then settled. Up to this period the bookcases had cost the large sum of 580 ducats or, if the value of the ducat be taken at six shillings and sixpence, £188 10s. of our money.

I will next notice some of the other purchases belonging to this part of my subject.

The purchase of chains began in January 1476.

Item solutum est bancho de Medicis in Mediolano eadem die [22 Jan. 1476] i.i ducatum (*sic*) pro catherinis emptis ad usum bibliothecæ et b. xxv.

Item solvi pro vectura octo balletorum catenarum ad usum Bibliothecæ ex Mediolano Romam avectarum ducatos x et b[ononenos] xxiii, computatis etiam gabellis quas solvit in multis locis, maxime vero in terris Ducis Mediolani, die secunda Aprilis, 1476.

Dedi calonibus qui portarunt catenas et reportarunt a magistro Joanne fabro carlenos quinque, reficere n[am] anulos oportuit (*sic*) qui parvi erant die IIII maii.

Item dedi eisdem carlenos IIII qui portarunt ferramenta quibus catenæ innituntur, eadem die.

Dedi eidem Francisco fabro lignario pro catenis librorum e Mediolano avectis ducatos XXI, erant autem docenæ centum XXXXIII, dedi autem

<sup>1</sup> Habuit ultimo ducatos octo pro tribus tabulis ex nuce cornisate (?) ad continenda nomina librorum e per le cornise de tre banchi vechi ex nuce die supradicta; nil omnino restat habere ut ipse sua manu affirmat, computatis in his illis LX bononenis qui superius scribuntur. Müntz, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Dedi Joanni pictori famulo m. Melotii pro pictura trium tabularum ubi descripta sunt librorum nomina carlenos XVIII die x Octobris 1477. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Magister Joanninus de Florentia et m. Marcus ejus frater faber lignarius habuere ducatos xxv pro parte solucionis banchorum quæ fiunt in bibliotheca addita nunc a Smo. d. nostro, die XVIII Julii 1480. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

dimidium ducatum pro qualibet docena, adduntur superiores soluti medio,  
et erit integra solutio catenarum omnium die vii Junii 1476<sup>1</sup>.

It is worth notice that so simple an article as a chain for a book could not be bought in Rome; but had to be sent for from Milan; where, by the way, the dues exacted by the government made the purchase irksome and costly. The total number of chains bought was 1728, and the total cost 102 ducats, or rather more than £33. The rings were found to be too small, and were altered in Rome. Nothing is said about the place from which the rods came (*ferramenta quibus catenæ innituntur*).

In 1477 (14 April) "John the chain-maker (*Joannes fabricator catenarum*)," doubtless the workman who is called simply *magister Joannes* in the previous account, supplies "48 iron rods on which the books are strung on the seats"<sup>2</sup> and also 48 locks, evidently connected with the same number of rods supplied before. In the same year a key-maker (*magister clavium*) supplies 22 locks for the seats and cupboards in the *Bibliotheca secreta*<sup>3</sup>; and in 1480, when the *Bibliotheca pontificia* was being fitted up, keys, locks, chains, and other ironwork were supplied by Bernardino, nephew of John of Milan<sup>4</sup>. There are many other payments for iron, which was often bought in the gross and worked up as required; but enough has been quoted to shew that ironwork, such as was required elsewhere by the medieval system of chaining, was in use here also.

For further information we must turn to the Catalogues. For my present purpose the first of these<sup>5</sup> is that by Platina, of which I have already spoken, dated 14 September, 1481. It is a small folio volume, written on vellum, with gilt edges, and

<sup>1</sup> Müntz, pp. 124—126.

<sup>2</sup> Magister Joannes fabricator catenarum habuit a me die xiii aprilis 1477 ducatos decem, ad summam centum et quinque ducatorum quos ei debebam pro tribus miliaribus et libris octingentis ferri fabrefacti ad usum bibliothecæ, videlicet pro quadraginta octo virgis ferreis ad quas in banchis libri connectuntur [etc.]. Müntz, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> MSS. Vat. 3947.

in plain binding that may be original. The first page has a lovely border of an enlaced pattern with the arms of Sixtus IV. in a circle at the bottom.

The compiler of the catalogue goes through the Library case by case, noting (at least in the Latin Library) the position of the case, the subjects of the books contained in it, and their titles. This is succeeded by an enumeration of the number of volumes, so as to shew, in a couple of pages, how many the whole Library contained. MM. Müntz and Fabre print this enumeration, but, so far as I know, the catalogue itself has not as yet been printed by any one. For my present purpose I shall combine the headings of the catalogue, the subjects, and the number of the volumes, as follows:

Inventarium Bibliothecæ Palatinæ Divi Sexti Quarti Pont. Max.

## [I. LATIN LIBRARY.]

[II. GREEK LIBRARY.]

In primo banco Bibliothecæ Grecæ	
<i>Testamentum vetus et novum</i>	42
In secundo banco	
<i>Auctores clariores [Fathers]</i>	31
In tertio banco	
<i>Auctores clariores</i>	46
In quarto banco	
<i>Auctores clariores</i>	49
In quinto banco	
<i>Ius civile et canonicum</i>	58
In sexto banco	
<i>In Philosophia</i>	59
In septimo banco	
<i>Oratores et Rethores</i>	57
In octauo banco	
<i>Historici. Poetæ et Grammatici</i>	58
	— 400

[III. INNER LIBRARY.]

[A. BANCHI.]

In primo banco Bibliothecæ Secretæ [Bibles, Fathers, etc.]	. . . . .	29
In secundo banco <i>In Theologia</i>	. . . . .	37
In tertio banco <i>In Philosophia</i>	. . . . .	41
In quarto banco <i>Ius canonicum</i>	. . . . .	20
In quinto banco <i>Concilia</i>	. . . . .	34
In sexto banco <i>In Astrologia.</i> <i>In Hebraico.</i> <i>In Dalmatico}</i> <i>In Arabico</i>	. . . . .	29

[B. ARMARIUM.]

[C. CAPSÆ.]

In prima capsula primi banchi Bibliothecæ Secretæ <i>In Theologia</i>	107
In secunda capsula primi banchi <i>Diversa facultas [Miscellanea]</i>	66
In prima capsula secundi banchi <i>[Privileges and Royal Letters in 3 volumes]</i>	3
In secunda capsula secundi banchi <i>[Miscellanea]</i>	124
In prima capsula tertii banchi <i>Philosophi</i>	90
In secunda capsula tertii banchi	[00]
In prima capsula quarti banchi <i>Historici</i>	65
In secunda capsula quarti banchi	[00]
In prima capsula quinti banchi <i>[Official forms]</i>	43
In secunda capsula quinti banchi <i>In Arabico</i>	23
In prima capsula sexti banchi <i>In Historia ecclesiastica. Ceremonialia</i>	67
In secunda capsula sexti banchi <i>Libri sine nomine ad quinquaginta parvi et modici quidem valoris</i>	50

[D. SPALERA.]

[IV. BIBLIOTHECA PONTIFICIA.]

[A. BANCHI.]

[B. SPALERA.]

Regestra Pontificum hic descripta in capsis Spaleræ Bibliothecæ Pontificiae per Platinam Bibliothecarium ex ordine recondita et in capsa prima . . . .	21
<i>Gregorius.</i>	
<i>Innocentius III.</i>	
<i>Honorius III.</i>	
<i>Gregorius VIII.</i>	
In secunda capsa Spaleræ Bibliothecæ Pontificiae . . . .	47
<i>Innocentius IIII.</i>	<i>Nicolaus III.</i>
<i>Alexander IIII.</i>	<i>Martinus IIII.</i>
<i>Clemens IV.</i>	<i>Honorius IIII.</i>
<i>Gregorius X.</i>	<i>Nicolaus IIII.</i>
<i>Innocentius V.</i>	<i>Bonifacius VIII.</i>
<i>Ioannes XXI.</i>	<i>Clemens V.</i>
In tertia capsa Bibliothecæ Pont. Regestra recondita par Platynam Bibliothecarium . . . .	16
<i>Ioannes XXII.</i>	
<i>Benedictus XII.</i>	
In quarta capsa Spaleræ Bibliothecæ Pontificiae Regestra recondita . . . .	16
<i>Clemens VI.</i>	
<i>Innocentius VI.</i>	
In quinta capsa Spaleræ Bibliothecæ Pontificiae Regestra recondita . . . .	15
<i>Vrbanus V.</i>	
<i>Gregorius XI.</i>	

These lists give the following results:

Latin Library, left hand, 9 seats	430
"        "    right "    7 "	313
	— 743
Greek Library	8 ,,
Inner     "	6 ,,
	190
	Armaria
	938
	Capsæ
	638
	Spalera
	216
	— 1982
Bibliotheca Pontificia	12 seats
	259
	5 Capsæ (Regestra)
	115
	— 374
	Total
	3499

Before proceeding farther, it should be noticed that, on a rough average, each seat in the Latin Library, left hand, contained 47 volumes, and in the same Library, right hand, 43 volumes. In the Greek Library, each seat contained 50 volumes; in the Inner Library, 31 volumes; in the *Bibliotheca pontificia*, 21 volumes.

In the next place I will give the results of the examination of a catalogue<sup>1</sup> of the Library, which M. Fabre, with much probability, assigns to the year 1512<sup>2</sup>. It begins as follows with the Latin Library:

Ad sinistra' Pontificeis bibliothecam introeuntibus

In primo scanno supra . . . . .	[27]
" " infra . . . . .	[27]
Finis primi scanni sub et supra . . . . .	[54]

The nine seats (*banchi*) of the left side of the Latin Library are gone through in the same way as the first, with the result that each is shewn to have two shelves. The total number of books is 457, or 27 more than in 1481.

On the opposite, or right hand side of the Library, the first two seats have three shelves, and are described as follows:

In primo scanno supra . . . . .	[22]
" " infra . . . . .	[27]
" eodem scanno inferius siue sub infra . . . . .	[26]
Finis primi scanni sub et subter . . . . .	[75]

On this side of the Latin Library the number of books has risen to 360 as against 313 of the previous catalogue.

In the Greek Library there are similarly two shelves to each seat, and the total number of volumes is 407 as against 400.

The account of the Inner Library begins as follows:

In secretiori bibliotheca	
In iij <sup>o</sup> . scanno supra . . . . .	[16]
" " infra . . . . .	[17]
" " inferius siue sub infra . . . . .	[21]

<sup>1</sup> MSS. Vat. 7135.

<sup>2</sup> *Lat Vaticane*, etc., p. 475.

Three of the seats have three shelves; the rest two; and the total number of volumes has become 222 as against 190: or, an average of 37 to each seat.

The *Bibliotheca pontificia* is introduced with the following heading:

In intima et ultima secretiori bibliotheca ubi libri sunt pretiosiores.

Each seat has two shelves, and the total number of volumes is 277 as against 259 in 1481. Among the MSS. occurs "Virgilius antiquus litteris maiusculis"—no doubt the Vatican Virgil (*Codex romanus*), a volume which fully justifies its place among those termed *libri pretiosiores*.

This catalogue closes with the following sentence :

Finis totius Bibliothecae Pontificie: viz. omnium scannorum tam Latinorum quam Grecorum in prima, secunda, tertia, et quarta eius distinctione et omnium omnino librorum: exceptis armariis et capsis: et iis libris, qui Graeci ex maxima parte, in scabellis parieti adherentibus in intima ac penitissima Bibliotheca parte sunt positi. Deo Laudes et Gratias.

The increase between 1481 and 1512 in the number of volumes in the parts of the Library defined in the above catalogue will be best understood from the following table, which shews that 131 volumes had been added in 31 years.

	1481	1512
Latin Library	743	817
Greek ,,	400	407
Bibliotheca secreta	190	222
,"      pontificia	259	277
Total	<hr/> 1592	<hr/> 1723

Another catalogue, unfortunately without date<sup>1</sup>, but which has every appearance of belonging to the same period, notes the rooms as *Bibliotheca magna publica*, i.e. the Latin and Greek Libraries taken together, the *Bibliotheca parva secreta*, and the *Bibliotheca magna secreta*.

<sup>1</sup> MS. Vat. 3946.

The catalogue drawn up by Zenobio Acciaioli, 12 October, 1518<sup>1</sup>, offers no peculiarity except that in the Inner Library each seat is noted as having three rows of books, thus :

In primo bancho bibliothecce parve secrete	
Infra in secundo ordine	
„      tertio      „	

We may now proceed to arrange the Library in accordance with the information derived from the Accounts and the catalogues, compared with the ground-plan (fig. 2).

The authorities shew that in each of the rooms the books were arranged on what are called 'banchi,' or, as they would have been termed in England, 'desks' or 'seats,' which were fitted with bars, locks, and chains. These fittings prove that the Library must have been intended as a place to read in, not merely as a receptacle for books. A further proof of this is afforded by the lavish decoration of the ceiling and the windows.

At this point I must explain what is meant by the word *banchus* or seat. In England in the 15th century it meant a piece of furniture consisting of three stout planks set on end, and connected together by two or more shelves, to which the books were chained. A desk on which the reader could lay his book was attached to each side of this piece of furniture, and a bench on which he could sit stood between each pair of desks. Such bookcases are still to be seen in various places, as, for instance, at Corpus Christi College, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Their general arrangement will be understood from the sketch here appended (fig. 3).

South of the Alps a slightly different arrangement was adopted. The shelf for the books, and the desk and seat for the reader, were combined, and pieces of furniture were produced such as we can still see at Cesena where the library was fitted up by Malatesta in 1452, and at Florence, where the bookcases were designed by Michael Angelo about 1530. No one, however, can study the two sets carefully, without

<sup>1</sup> MS. Vat. 3948.

being convinced that the older served as a model for the more modern. Moreover, as I have often urged when speaking on this subject, no forms are so persistent as those of pieces of furniture, and I feel sure that in these libraries we have survivals of what was once in general use. Again, it must be remembered that Sixtus IV. was General of the Franciscans when elected Pope, and would of course be familiar with the houses of his Order, and, as the Library of

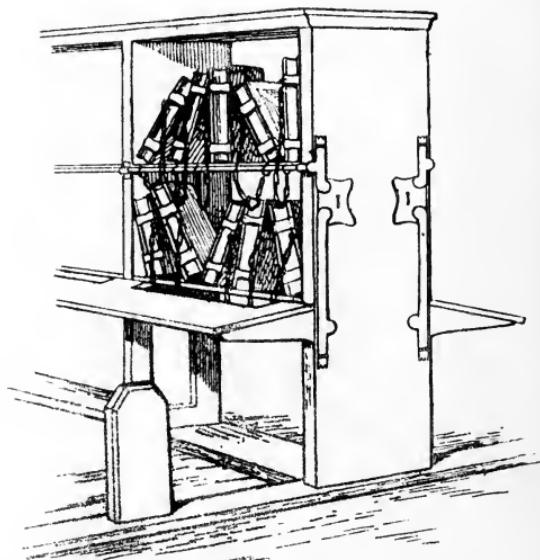


FIG. 3. Diagrammatic sketch of a bookcase with reader's desk and seat, in an English Library of the fifteenth century.

the Malatestas was attached to a Franciscan convent, it is most probable that he had visited it. We shall not be far wrong, I feel sure, in taking the general design of the seats at Cesena as a model for those of the Vatican.

I need not, for my present purpose, describe the desks at either Cesena or Florence minutely<sup>1</sup>. Their general scheme will be understood from the illustrations (figs. 4, 5), and from

<sup>1</sup> I have given an account of the library at Cesena in *Camb. Ant. Soc. Proc. and Comm.* viii. 2-6.

the elevations (figs. 6, 7). It will be sufficient to mention that at the former place the width of one desk and seat with the interval between it and the next is 4 ft., and at the latter 3 ft. 4 in. In the Vatican Library I have allowed 3 ft. only,



FIG. 5. Book-desks and reader's seats in the Biblioteca Laurentiana, Florence.

as it was evidently necessary to pack the desks as close together as possible. The height of both sets of desks is about 4 ft.

As a proof that the desks in the Vatican Library could not

have been much higher than this, I will quote the following curious rule, copied, as it would appear, in the Library itself, by Claude Bellièvre of Lyons, who visited Rome about 1513:

Nonnulla quæ collegi in bibliotheca Vaticani. Edictum S. D. N. Ne quis in bibliotheca cum altero contentiose loquatur et obstrepat, neve de loco ad locum iturus sciamna transcendat et pedibus conterat, atque libros claudat et in locum percommode reponat. Ubique volet perlegerit. Secus qui faxit foras cum ignominia mittetur atque hujusc loci aditu deinceps arcebitur<sup>1</sup>.

Another point is worth notice as bearing on the question of the style of desk used. At Cesena and at Florence the bar of iron along which the rings of the chains play, is under the edge of the desk; and the opposite end of the chain is fastened to the middle of the lower edge of the right hand board. I have examined a good many manuscripts now in the Vatican Library which formed part of the older collection; and wherever the mark of the chain has not been obliterated by rebinding, it is in the precise position required for the above system.

The arrangement of each room is not quite so simple as it might appear at first sight; and, besides the desks, there are other pieces of furniture to be accounted for. We will therefore go through the rooms in order with the ground plan (fig. 2). On this plan the cases are coloured gray, the reader's seats are indicated by transverse lines, and the intervals are left white.

*Latin Library.* The Accounts tell us that there were 10 seats on the left hand of the Latin Library, and that these were longer than the rest, measuring 38 palms each, or about 27 ft. 9 in. English<sup>2</sup>.

As the distance from the central pier to the west wall is just 27 ft. 6 in., it is obvious that the cases must have stood north and south—an arrangement which is also convenient for readers, as the light would fall on them from the left hand. For this reason I have placed the first desk against the pier,

<sup>1</sup> Bibl. Nat. Paris, MSS. Lat. 13123, fol. 220, quoted by Müntz et Fabre, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> I have taken 1 palm=mètre 0·223; and 1 mètre=39·37 in.

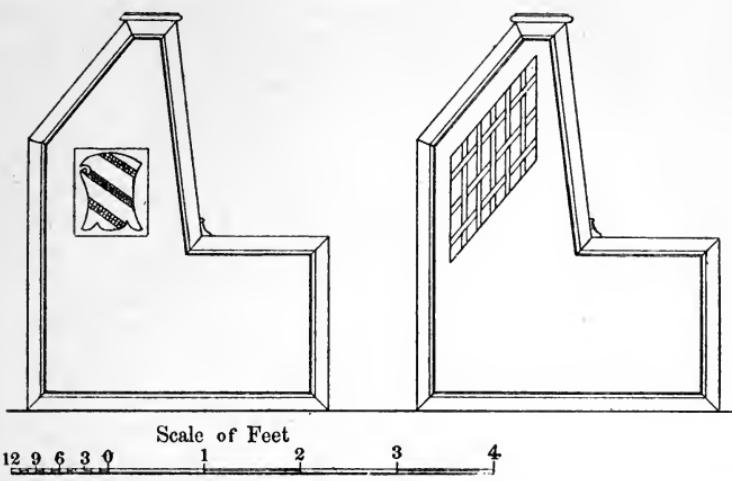


FIG. 6. Elevation of book-desks and reader's seats, Cesena.

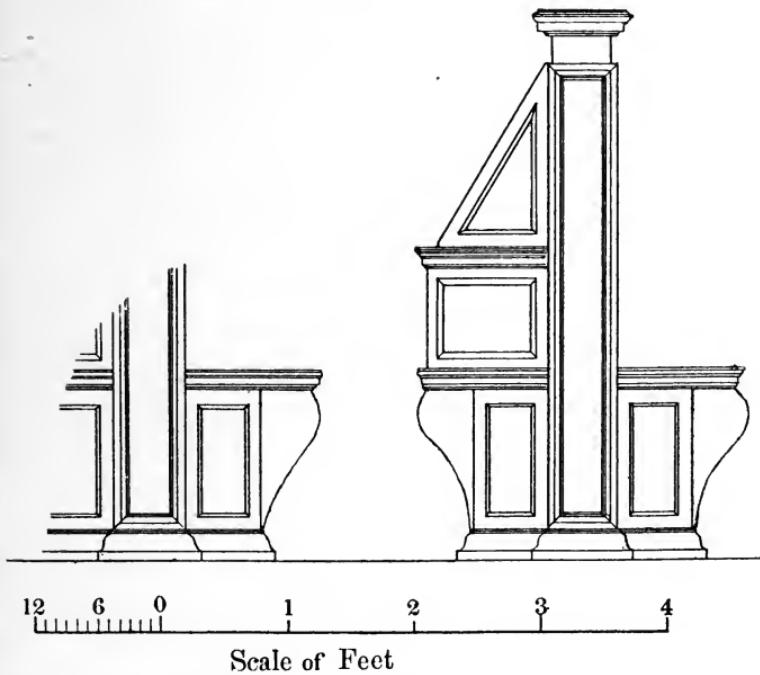


FIG. 7. Elevation of book-desks and reader's seats, Biblioteca Laurentiana, Florence.

the reader's seat being westward of it. A difficulty now arises. It is stated in the Accounts that *ten banchi* are paid for, but all the catalogues mention only *nine*. I suggest that the explanation is to be found in the fact that ten pieces of furniture do occur between the pier and the wall, the first of which is a shelf and desk, and the last a seat only. This arrangement is to be seen in the Medicean Library at Florence. The room being 32 ft. 6 in. wide, space is left for a passage along the south wall to the door (*a*) of the Librarian's room, and also for another along the opposite ends of the desks.

For the arrangement of the rest of the Library, the Accounts give a most important piece of information. They tell us that the whole of the seats for the Common Library, i.e. the Latin and Greek Libraries taken together, 25 in number, cost 300 ducats, of which sum the 10 long seats above-mentioned absorbed 130 ducats, leaving 170 to pay for the remaining 15<sup>1</sup>. From these data it is not difficult to calculate the cost of each palm, and from that the number of palms that 170 ducats would buy. I make this to be 510 palms, or about 373 feet<sup>2</sup>.

It is, I think, obvious that there must have been some sort of vestibule just inside the door of entrance, where students could be received, and where they could consult the catalogue or the Librarian. Further, the catalogues shew that the seven desks arranged in this part of the Library were in all probability shorter than those of the opposite side, for they contained fewer volumes. If we allow each of them 21 ft. 4 in. in length<sup>3</sup>, we shall dispose of 149 ft., which leaves 224 ft. for the 8 desks of the Greek Library, or, 28 ft. for each, with one foot over.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 26, 27.

<sup>2</sup> My calculation works out as follows. Each of 10 seats was 38 palms long: total length, 380 palms. As these 10 seats cost 130 ducats, each palm cost  $\frac{130}{380}$  ducats =  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a ducat nearly.

As the total paid was 300 ducats, this first payment, viz. 130 ducats, left 170 ducats still due for the 15 remaining seats. As each palm cost a third of a ducat, 170 ducats would buy 510 palms = 113·73 metres = 4477 inches (nearly) = 373 feet.

<sup>3</sup> By an unfortunate error, for which I alone am responsible, these desks have been drawn too short.

*Greek Library.* In this room there were eight seats, and, as explained above, each was about 28 ft. long. The room being 28 ft. wide, this number, with a width of 3 ft. for each, is very convenient, and leaves a passage 4 ft. wide along the west wall. The length, moreover, does not interfere with the passage from door to door, and leaves a short interval between the ends of the desks and the opposite wall.

*Inner Library.* In this room space has to be provided for (1) six seats, each holding on an average about 30 volumes; (2) a press (*armarium*) with five divisions, and holding 938 volumes; (3) a settle (*spalera*). This piece of furniture, in modern Italian *spalliere*, French, *épauleière*, is common in large houses at the present day. It usually stands in an ante-room or on a landing of one of the long staircases. A portion at least of the *spalliere* used in this Library are still in existence. They stood in the vestibule of the present Vatican Library until a short time ago, when the present Pope had them removed to the Appartamento Borgia, where they stand against the wall round one of the rooms. There are two distinct designs of different heights and ornamentation. The photograph here reproduced (fig. 8) was taken specially for my use. The *spalliere* have evidently been a good deal altered in the process of fitting up, and moreover, as it is impossible to discover whether we have the whole or only a part of what once existed, it is useless to make any suggestion, from the length of the portions that remain, as to which room they may once have fitted. They are excellent specimens of inlaid work. That on the right, with the row of crosses along the cornice, is 6 ft. 2 in. high, and 66 ft. long. That on the left is 5 ft. 10 in. high, and 24 ft. 7 in. long. The *capsae* project from the wall 1 ft. 4 in., and are 2 ft high. Their lids vary a little in length, from 3 ft. 11 in. to 4 ft. 10 in.

I have placed the *armarium* at the end of the room, opposite the window. It was 20 ft. wide, and had 5 divisions, each, we will suppose, about 4 ft. wide. Let us suppose further that it was 7 ft. high, and had 6 shelves. If we allow 8 volumes to each foot, each shelf would hold 32 volumes, and each

division six times that number, or 192. This estimate for each division will give a total of 960 volumes for the five divisions, a number slightly in excess of that mentioned in Platina's catalogue.

After allowing a space 5 ft. wide in front of the press, there is plenty of room left for 6 desks, each 27 ft. long. The last seat, that on the west side next the passage leading to the end of the room, might be the *spalliera*, with its four coffers (*capsæ*) under the seat.

But the presence of a *spalliera* is not the only peculiarity in the furniture of this room. Platina's catalogue shews that, connected in some manner with each seat, were two coffers (*capsæ*). What are we to understand by this? M. Fabre considers that these *capsæ* were independent chests, placed at the end of each seat. I feel disposed to think that they formed part of the desks. They are described in the catalogue in precisely the same language as those of the *spalliera*, viz.

In prima capsæ spalerae  
In prima capsæ primi banchi,

and I am inclined to place them under the seats of the desks, which are left open both at Cesena and at Florence, but would have been equally convenient to readers had they been closed. I do not mean to suggest that two chests extended over the full length of each seat, but that chests were contrived under the seat, perhaps at each end of it, of the same length as those of the *spalliera*, each of which was 7 ft. long.

In favour of the other view I have to admit that room was evidently scarce in this part of the Library, for it has been shewn that a second, and in some cases a third, shelf was added to the desks as the number of volumes increased. It is possible, therefore, that they were shorter than I have drawn them, in order to leave room for a chest to stand at their ends. Further, there is a note at the end of the catalogue of 1512 which records the position and contents of some of the *capsæ*. I confess that I do not understand it, though I have bestowed much time and thought upon it, but I print it, in the hope

that some one else may be more fortunate. It will be observed that the fifth bench or seat (*scamnum*, a word which I take to be equivalent to *banchus*) has two *capsæ* attached to it; and that the sixth seat has three.

In prima capsæ . . . . .	1-105
In secunda sequenti capsæ . . . . .	106-179
In tertia capsæ per ordinem sequente . . . . .	180-251
In quarta capsæ: non que statim sequitur nam ea est libris vacua ad vsum custodum: sed pone sequenti: et v°. scamno adherenti . . . . .	252-301
In quinta capsæ immediate sequenti . . . . .	302-384
In sexta capsæ immediate sequenti et sexto scamno adherenti: que prima se offert . . . . .	385-447
In septima capsæ, videlicet sexte coniuncta . . . . .	448-559
In octaua capsæ muro adherenti que post septimam ad in- gressum sexti scamni prima offertur . . . . .	560-606

Lastly, there is an entry which escaped my notice when I first wrote this paper, recording the arrival of twelve *capsæ*, as though they were independent pieces of furniture<sup>1</sup>.

*Innermost Library*, or, *Bibliotheca pontificia*. This Library contained 12 desks. These, from their number, must have stood east and west. There was also a *spalliera*, which held the Papal Registers. I have placed it in the recess on the north side of the room, which looks as though made for it.

It should be noted that there was a map of the world in the Library, for which a frame was bought in 1478<sup>2</sup>; and a couple of globes—the one celestial the other terrestrial. Covers made of sheepskin were bought for them in 1477<sup>3</sup>. Globes

<sup>1</sup> Item pro xii capsis latis in bibliothecam secretam. Müntz et Fabre, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Per lo tellaro del mappamondo b. 52. Müntz, p. 129. Habuere pictores armorum quæ sunt facta in duabus sphæris solidis et pro pictura mappemundi ducatos III, die XII decembris 1477. Müntz et Fabre, p. 151. This map had probably been provided by Pius II. (1458-1464), who kept in his service Girolamo Bellavista, a Venetian maker of maps. Müntz et Fabre, 126.

<sup>3</sup> Expendi pro cohupertura facta duobus sphæris solidis quarum in altera est ratio signorum, in altera cosmographia, ducatos IIII videlicet cartenos XVI in octo pellibus montoninis, cartenos XXV in manufactura; sunt nunc ornata graphio cum armis s. d. n., die XX decembris 1477. Müntz et Fabre, p. 152. M. Fabre quotes an extract in praise of the map and globes from a letter written from Rome in 1505, *La Vaticane de Sixte IV*, p. 471 note.

with and without such covers are shewn in the view of the Library of the University of Leiden taken in 1610; and M. Fabre reminds us that globes still form part of the furniture of the Library of the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, fitted up by Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 1630–40<sup>1</sup>.

Comfort was considered by the provision of a brazier on wheels “that it may be moved from place to place in the Library<sup>2</sup>. ”

Before concluding, I must quote two important descriptions of this Library. The first is by Francesco Albertini, who, in 1510, only nineteen years after Platina’s death, published the description of Rome known as *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*.

#### De Bibliotecis novæ Urbis

In Palatio apostolico in Vaticano est illa præclara biblioteca a Syxto IIII constructa cum eius imagine, ac pulcherrimis picturis exornata cum his carminibus :

Templa [etc.] as quoted above.

Sunt picturae Doctorum et alia carmina ut dicam in opusculo epitaphiorum.

Est et alia bibliotheca apud prædictam quæ græca dicitur ab eodem Syxto constructa cum camera custodum.

Est et tertia bibliotheca pulcherrima, in qua sunt codices auro et argento sericinisque tegminibus exornati, a prædicto Syxto constructa, in quo loco Vergilii opera vidi litteris maiusculis conscripta.

Omitto strumenta geometriæ et astronomiæ et alia quæ in liberalibus disciplinis pertinent auro et argento picturis exornata<sup>3</sup>.

The following description is by Montaigne :

Le 6 de Mars [1581] je fus voir la librerie du Vatican qui est en cinq ou six salles tout de suite. Il y a un grand nombre de livres attachés sur plusieurs rangs de pupitres; il y en a aussi dans des coffres, qui me furent tous ouverts; force livres écrits à mein et notamment un Seneque et les Opuscules de Plutarche. J'y vis de remarquable la statue du bon Aristide<sup>4</sup> à tout une bele teste chauve, la barbe espessee, grand front, le

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Müntz, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Francisci Albertini Opusculum de Mirabilibus novæ Urbis Romæ: ed. Schmarsow. 8vo. Heilbronn, 1886, p. 33. Albertini never published the promised “Opusculum epitaphiorum.”

<sup>4</sup> This statue, found in Rome in the middle of the sixteenth century, represents Aristides Smyrnæus, a Greek rhetorician of the second century after Christ. It is still in the Vatican Library, at the entrance to the Museo Christiano.

regard plein de douceur et de magesté: son nom est escrit en sa base très antique...<sup>1</sup>

Je la vis [la Bibliothèque] sans nulle difficulté; chacun la voit einsin et en extrait ce qu'il veut; et est ouverte quasi tous les matins, et si fus conduit partout, et convié par un jantilhomme d'en user quand je voudrois<sup>2</sup>.

The statue of Aristides was placed by Pope Pius IV. (1559–65) in the Common Library, on one side of the door of entrance, opposite to the statue of S. Hippolytus, found in 1551 near the church of S. Lorenzo fuori le mura<sup>3</sup>.

#### V. *Administration.*

Sixtus IV., like his predecessor Nicholas V., intended the library attached to the Holy See to be of the widest possible use. In the document appointing Demetrius of Lucca librarian, after Platina's death, he says distinctly that the library has been got together "for the use of all men of letters, both of our own age, or of subsequent time<sup>4</sup>"; and that these are not rhetorical expressions, to round a phrase in a formal letter of appointment, is proved by the way in which manuscripts were lent out of the library, during the whole time that Platina was in office. The Register of Loans, beginning with his own appointment and ending in 1485, has been printed by Müntz and Fabre, from the original in the Vatican Library<sup>5</sup>, and a most interesting record it is. It is headed by a few words of warning, of which I give the general sense rather than a literal translation.

Whoever writes his name here in acknowledgment of books received on loan out of the Pope's library, will incur his anger and his curse unless he return them uninjured within a very brief period.

This statement is made by Platina, librarian to his Holiness, who entered upon his duties on the last day of February, 1475<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In the omitted passage Montaigne describes a number of books shewn to him.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal du voyage de Michel de Montaigne en Italie*, ed. Prof. Alessandro d' Ancona. 8vo. Città di Castello, 1895, p. 269. I owe this quotation to M. Fabre.

<sup>3</sup> Fabre, *La Vaticane*, p. 481.

<sup>4</sup> Müntz et Fabre, p. 299.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 269—298. MSS. Vat. Lat. 3964.

<sup>6</sup> Quisquis es qui tuum nomen hic inscribis ob acceptos commodo libros e bibliotheca pontificis, scito te indignationem ejus et execrationem incursum nisi peropportune integros reddideris. Hoc tibi denuntiat Platyna, S. suæ bibliothecarius, qui tantæ rei curam suscepit pridie Kal. Martii 1475.

Each entry records the title of the book lent, with the name of the borrower. This entry is sometimes made by the librarian, but more frequently by the borrower himself. When the book is returned, Platina or his assistant notes the fact, with the date. The following entry, taken almost at random, will serve as a specimen :

Ego Gaspar de Ozino sapientissimi domini nostri cubicularius anno salutis MCCCCCLXXV die vero XXI Aprilis confiteor habuisse nomine mutui a domino Platina Lecturam sive commentum in pergameno super libris x Etticorum Aristotelis, et in fidem omnium mea propria manu scripsi et superscripsi. Liber autem pavonatio copertus est in magno volumine.—Idem Gaspar manu propria.—Restituit fideliter librum ipsum et repositus est inter philosophos die XVIII April 1475.

It is occasionally noted that a book is lent with its chain, as for instance :

Christoforus prior S. Balbina habuit Agathium Historicum ex banco VIII<sup>o</sup> cum cathena... Restituit die XX Octobris post mortem Platyne.

When no chain is mentioned are we to understand that the book was not so protected, and that there were in the library a number of books without chains, perhaps for the purpose of being more conveniently borrowed?

A few words should be added on the staff of the library. At first—that is during the year 1475—Platina had under his orders three subordinates, Demetrius, Salvatus, and John. These are called writers (*scriptores*) or keepers (*custodes*); and Salvatus is once called librarian (*librarius*), but it will be shewn below that this word means a writer rather than a librarian, as we understand the word. The position of these persons was extremely humble; and Salvatus was so indigent that his shoes were mended at the Pope's expense, and a decent suit of clothes provided for him at the cost of eight ducats<sup>1</sup>. Besides these there was a book-binder, also called John. In the following year two keepers only are mentioned, Demetrius and Josias. The latter died of the plague in

<sup>1</sup> Dedi die XIII Septembris 1475 ducatum unum Salvato scriptori pro emendis calligis. Item expendi pro veste una Salvati scriptoris seminudi et algentis ducatos VIII de mandato sancti domini nostri. Müntz et Fabre, p. 148.

1478. The salary of the librarian was at the rate of ten ducats a month, and that of each of his subordinates at the rate of one ducat for the same period. This arrangement appears to have been confirmed by a Bull of Sixtus IV. before the end of 1477<sup>1</sup>; and it subsisted till 1480, when the Pope formally appointed Demetrius keeper, with a salary of three gold ducats a month, and other emoluments, the amount of which is not specified<sup>2</sup>. Shortly afterwards (28 April, 1481) the Pope appointed a second keeper, Jean de Chadel of Lyons<sup>3</sup>.

These officers and Platyna appear to have lived together in the rooms adjoining the Latin Library, as shewn by the accounts for the purchase of beds, furniture, and the like<sup>4</sup>; and when Josias falls ill of the plague, Platina sends away Demetrius and John, the book-binder, "for fear they should die or infect others<sup>5</sup>."

Besides the regular staff, we meet with special engagements to do certain definite pieces of work. For instance, in 1476 a person called Cassius of Parma—but whose real name, as appears by his receipt when the final payment was made to him, was Johannes Antonii de Sasso de Parma—is engaged to write a Register of Bulls and other documents in three volumes. He is usually described as *librarius*—a word which evidently at that date meant a maker of books—a writer<sup>6</sup>—as Cassius is in fact called in the last entry relating to him. Another writer, Simon of Cologne, is engaged in 1478 to transcribe the works of Celsus; and two others, whose names are not given, to transcribe certain treatises of Jerome and Augustine.

<sup>1</sup> *Habui ego Platyna sanctissimi domini nostri bibliothecarius ducatos triginta pro salario meo, quod est decem ducatorum in mense, ab idibus Julii usque ad idus Octobris 1477, quemadmodum appetit in bulla de facultatibus officiis et muneribus a sanctissimo domino nostro papa Sixto III facta.* *Ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Müntz, pp. 129, 133.

<sup>5</sup> Item dedi ducatos quinque pro quolibet Demetrio et Johanni ligatori librorum quos ex mandato domini nostri foras misi, mortuo ex peste eorum socio, ne ipsi quoque eo loci interirent vel alios inficerent, die VIII junii 1478. Müntz et Fabre, p. 153.

<sup>6</sup> This is the signification of the word in *Ducange*.

All articles required for the due maintenance of the library were provided by Platina. The charges for binding and lettering are the most numerous. Skins were bought in the gross—on one occasion as many as 600—and then prepared for use. All other materials, as gold, colours, varnish, nails, horn, clasps, &c., were bought in detail, when required ; and probably used in some room adjoining the library. Platina also saw to the illumination (*miniatio*) of such MSS. as required it.

Comfort and cleanliness were not forgotten. There are numerous charges for coals, with an amusing apology for their use in winter “because the place was so cold” ; and for juniper to fumigate (*ad suffumigandum*). Brooms are bought to clean the library, and fox-tails to dust the books (*ad tergendos libros*<sup>1</sup>).

It should further be mentioned that Sixtus assigned an annual income to the library by a brief dated 15th July, 1477. It is therein stipulated that the fees, paid according to custom by all officials appointed to any office vacated by resignation, should thenceforward be transferred to the account of the library<sup>2</sup>.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

After reading this paper I paid a second visit to Rome, in April of the present year, in order to re-examine the *Floreria*, and also to talk over what I had written with Father Ehrle, whose interest in my researches has been throughout of the greatest value to me. I can never be sufficiently grateful to him for the help which he has ungrudgingly given me on all occasions ; and I am glad of this opportunity of publicly stating how much I am indebted to him.

Father Ehrle had already informed me by letter of the existence of a fresco in the Ospedale di Santo Spirito, which he had not had an opportunity of examining himself, but which

<sup>1</sup> The entries alluded to in this account will all be found in Müntz and Fabre, pp. 148—158.

<sup>2</sup> The document is printed by Müntz and Fabre, p. 300.

was said to give a view of the interior of the library of Sixtus IV., with the books and furniture.

This vast Hospital, situated on the right bank of the Tiber, a short distance below the Ponte S. Angelo, was rebuilt by Sixtus IV. on an enlarged scale, and after its completion in 1482, one of the halls on the ground floor was decorated with a series of frescoes representing the improvements which he had carried out in the city of Rome<sup>1</sup>. This hall is of great height, and lighted by a row of large windows just beneath the roof. The frescoes decorate the spaces between these windows, one between each pair. In such a position the light is not good, and the paintings have suffered somewhat from the effects of time; but the subjects and even the details can be readily made out.

It is curious that notwithstanding the attention bestowed of late years on Italian art, and the interest that has always been taken in the Ospedale di Santo Spirito itself as a specimen of the architecture of the early Renaissance, no one should have thought these frescoes worth studying before 1884, just five hundred years after the more important pictures of the series were painted. The criticism to which they have been submitted since the above date has failed to discover the name of the artist; but it has shewn that the tradition which attributes to Platina the choice of the subjects, and the wording of their inscriptions, is probably true; and further, that the earlier pictures in the series, of which the Library is one, were executed before his death in 1481<sup>2</sup>. I am now able to append a photographic reproduction of the fresco representing the interior of the Library (fig. 9), which Signor Danesi has executed for me, under the superintendence of Father Ehrle, with even more than his usual success.

Those who have been engaged in researches similar to mine will readily understand my feelings of satisfaction as I stood in

<sup>1</sup> For an account of what Sixtus accomplished at Santo Spirito see Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Engl. Tran. iv. 460—462.

<sup>2</sup> Brockhaus, *Janitschek's Repertorium für Kunsthissenschaften*, Band vii. (1884); Schmarsow, *Melozzo da Forli* (1886), pp. 202—207.

front of this fresco, and saw that my suggestion as to the probable style of the desks in the Library of Sixtus IV. had been correct. Though not so massive as those at Cesena, they are on precisely the same plan.

The artistic merit of such a work as this may not be great; but I feel certain that the man who painted it, faithfully reproduced what he saw without drawing on his imagination; and that we may therefore trust the picture as a true record of what once existed.

The desks are of a convenient height for a reader to use, as shewn by the three students at work in different parts of the Library. The books lie on sloping desks with a ledge in front to prevent them from slipping off. Each desk has a single shelf, and the seat is attached to the desk as at Cesena and Florence, instead of being a separate piece of furniture, as would have been the case in England. The chains have unfortunately been omitted, probably from a wish to avoid detail. It will be noticed that each desk is fully furnished with volumes laid out upon it, and that these vary in number and size, and have different bindings. It may be argued that the artist wished to compliment his patrons by making the most of their property; but I should be inclined to maintain that this was the normal condition of the Library, and that the books, handsomely bound and protected by numerous bosses of metal, usually lay upon the desks ready for use.

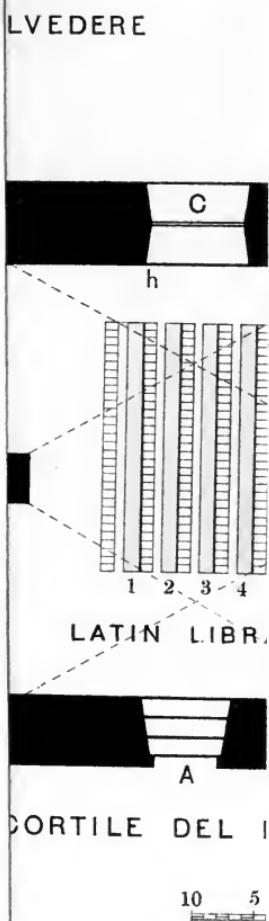
If this fresco be compared with the earlier work of Melozzo da Forli, it is not difficult to identify four of the persons present in the Library (other than the readers). The central figure is obviously Sixtus IV., and the Cardinal to whom he is speaking is, I think, meant for Giuliano della Rovere, afterwards Julius II. The figure immediately behind the Pope may be intended for Pietro Riario, and the figure behind him is certainly Platina. The others, I take it, are simply attendants.

Nor must it be forgotten that, important as this fresco is in connexion with the Library of the Vatican, it is of even greater interest as a contemporary representation of a large fifteenth century library.

12 September, 1899.



FIG. 4. General view of the Library at Cesena.



2. Ground-plan of the

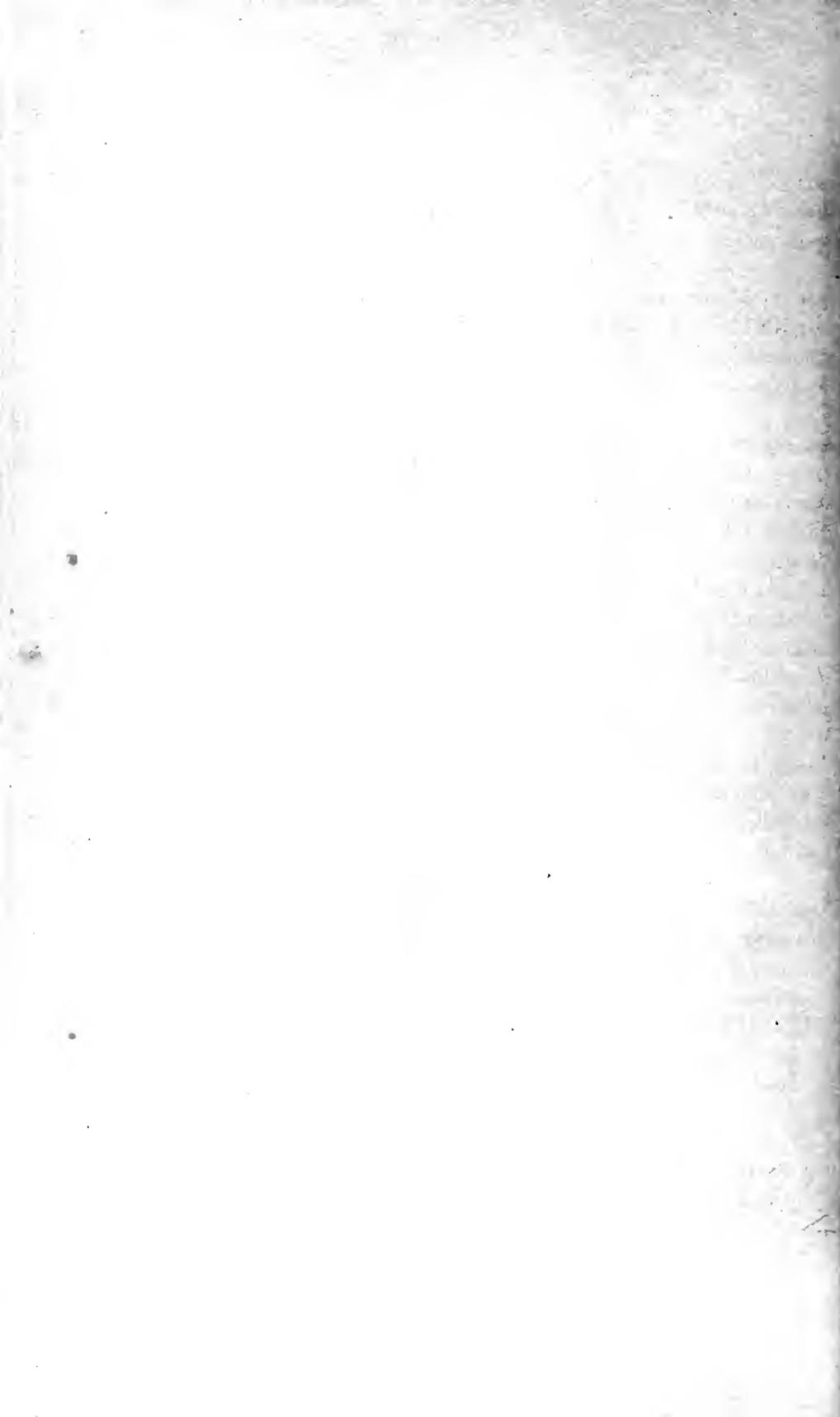


FIG. 4. General view of the Library at Cesena.

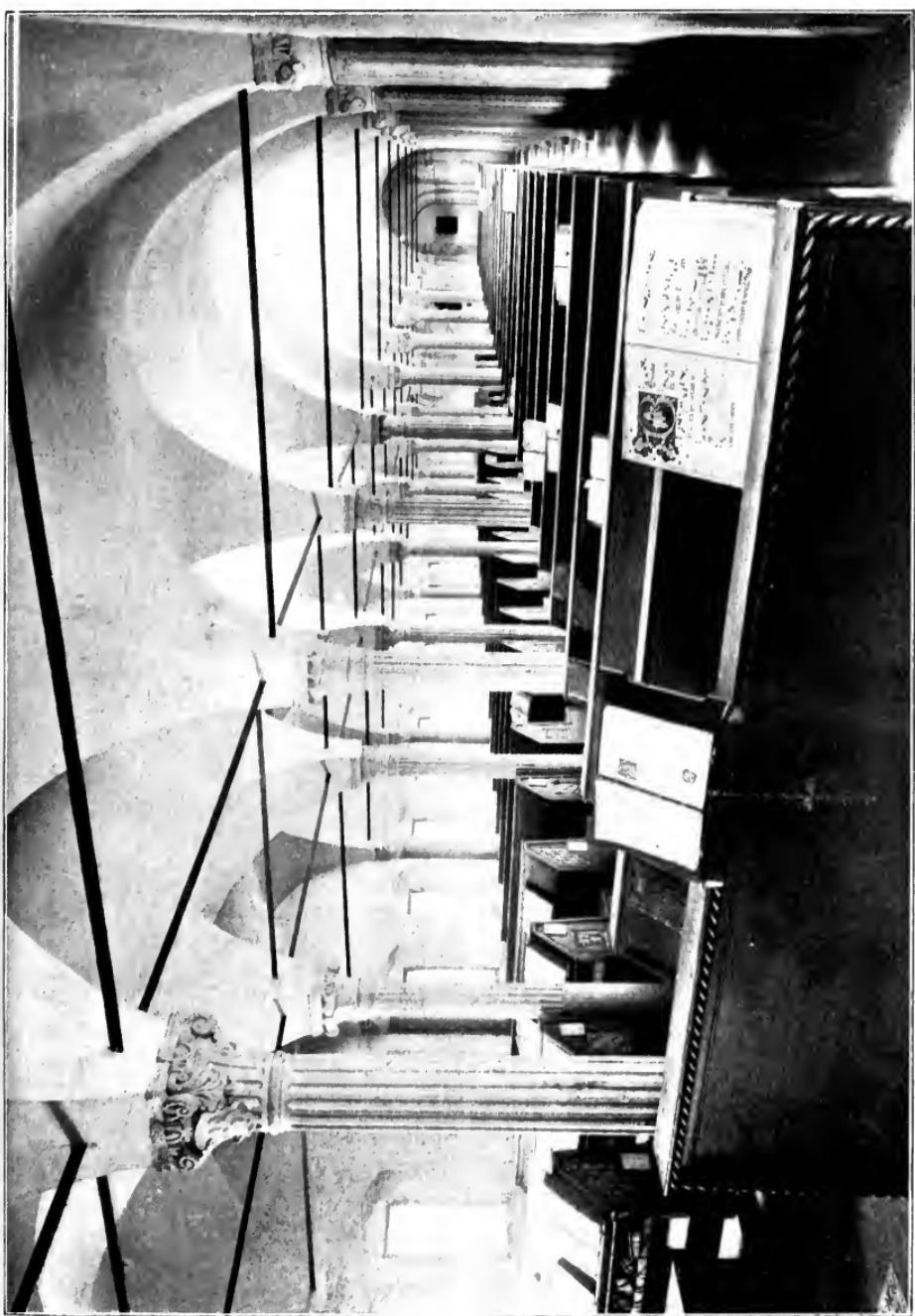






FIG. 8. The library-settees (*palliere*) once used in the Vatican Library of Sixtus IV.

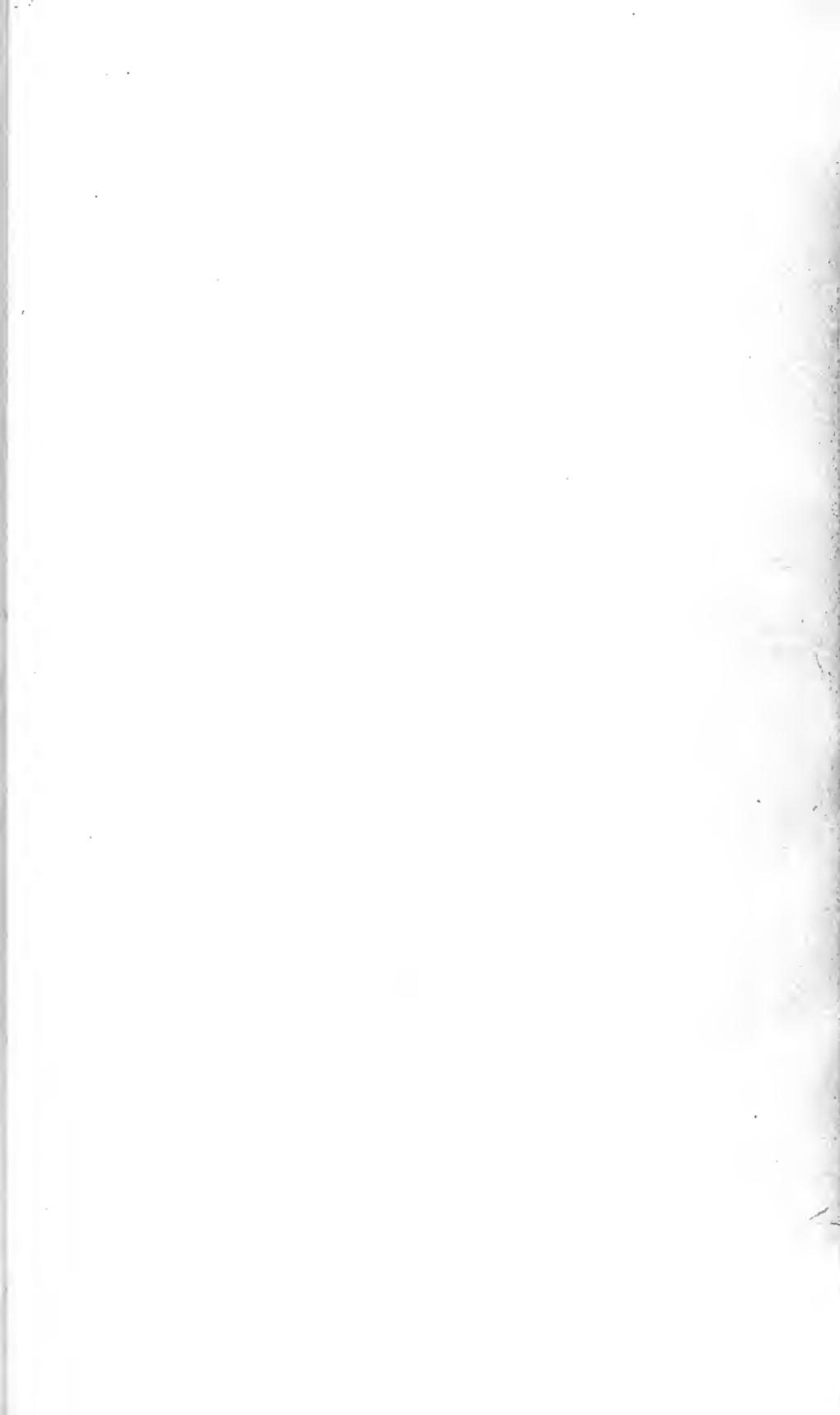
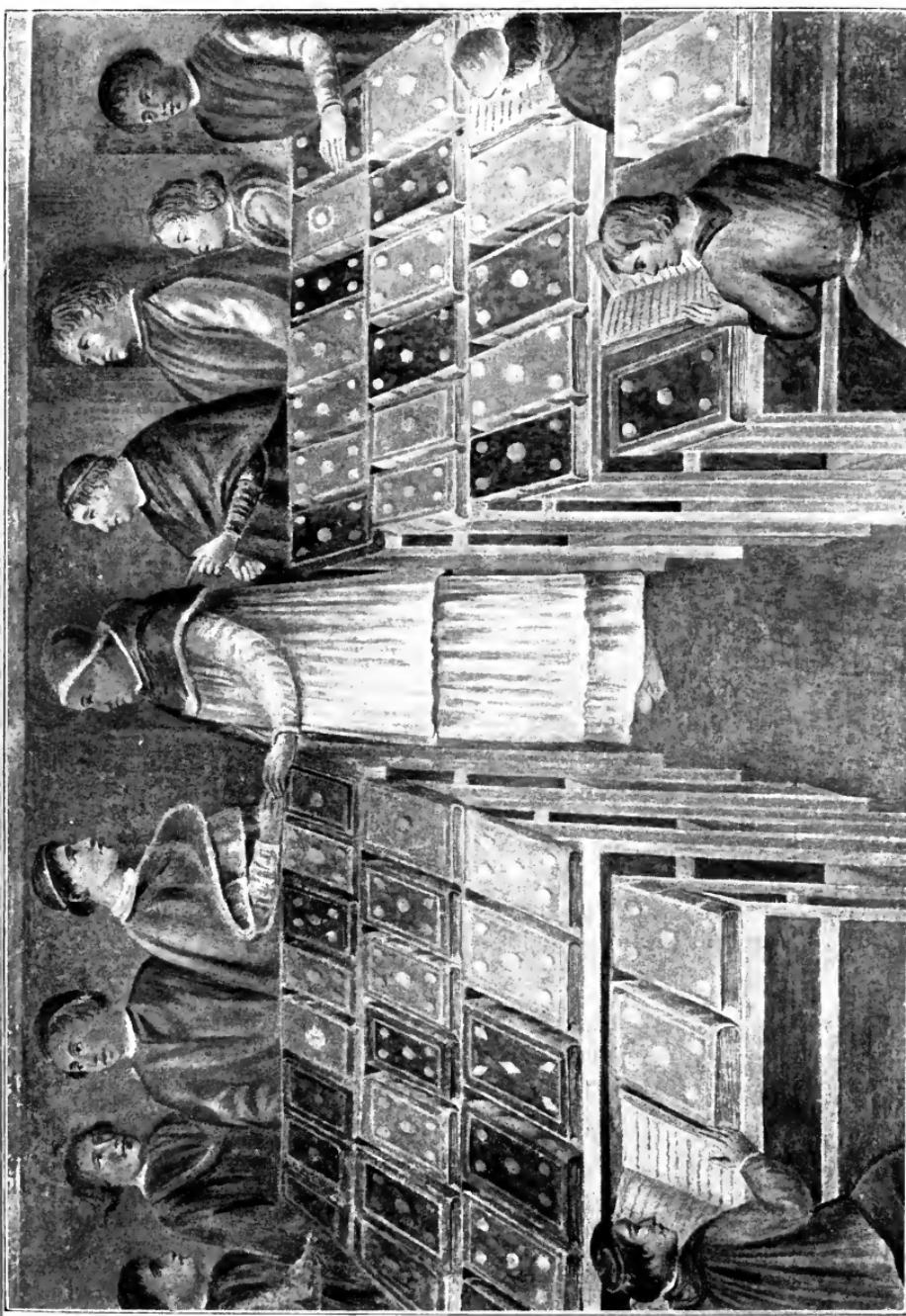
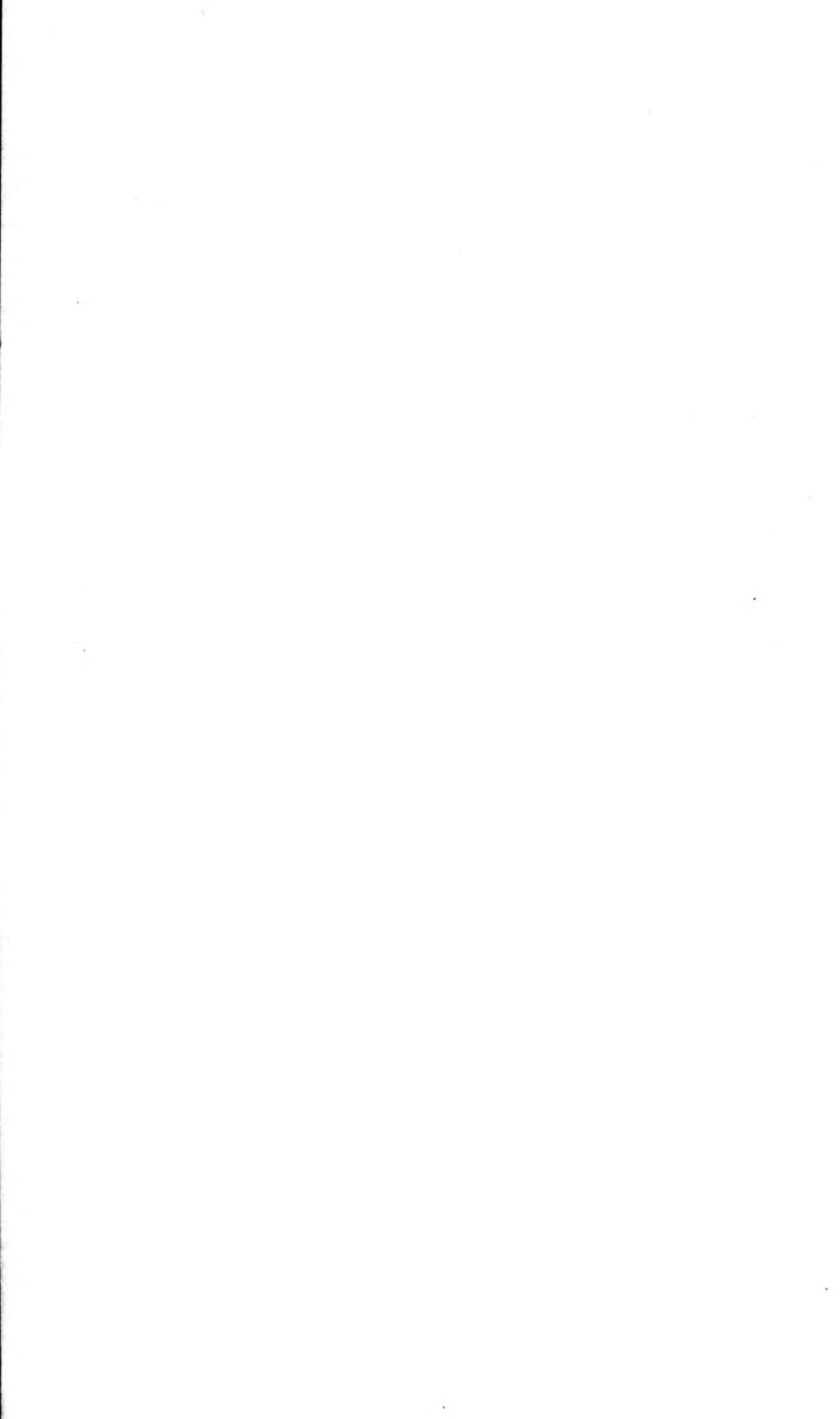


FIG. 9. Interior of the Library of Sixtus IV, as shewn in a fresco in the Hospital of Santo Spirito, Rome.



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On the Vatican library of .V3  
Sixtus IV

